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COMMENT

ast month I banged on about how we couldn't tell an awful lot from Billy Mac's early-season form and that we had to wait until the world championship kicked off to see if he really was as fast as his Maxxis results would have us believe. Well, I'm happy to say he's every bit as fast - if not faster - and after three GPs Billiam's holding down fourth in the world, just four points behind MX1 championship favourite Josh Coppins. The high point was a race two second at Valkenswaard (in the sand!) and you can be certain that if his confidence keeps building the results will keep coming.

If you're not lucky enough to be heading out to Bulgaria or Italy then your next chance to see Billy in action will be at the British GP at Mallory Park and I can't stress enough how important it is that we turn out in force to cheer him on. And it's not just Billy we need to get behind. This year we've got genuine contenders in all three (yep, three – the Vets are racing as well) classes and our support could be worth half-a-second a lap and that could be the difference between winning and losing. Billy knows what it's like to win a GP and so for that matter do Swordy and Tommy Searle who, along with Shaun Simpson, are heading a three-pronged British assault on the MX2 division. Last year's Vet champ Dave Thorpe didn't have the best of days at round one of the old-timers championship in Spain so we need to get behind him n'all - and while we're at it cheer on Bellpuig race winner Greg Hanson and current second-place man Scott Eastwood.

Since the heady days of Foxhill we've struggled to find a regular GP venue - Gore Basin, Matterley Basin, Matchams and Donington have all tried and failed to replace the legendary Swindon circuit - and we need some stability or we risk slipping off the FIM radar again. So it's vital that we turn out en masse, give our home heroes a helping hand and - just as importantly - show promoters RHL that it's worth their while sticking their necks out again in 2009. For ticket details and a full preview turn to pages 44-47.

For the second time in as many months something Steve Matthes said in his Radio America column has set my mind whirring. This month Steve talks us through a typical week in the life of a factory US mechanic during the annual changeover period from indoors to outdoors and one thing's clear - no matter how glamorous it looks from the outside, it ain't all fun and games for Uncle Sam's hard-working wrenches

I've lost count of the number of letters we've received from eager young readers looking for a way into the hallowed 'industry' who've seen people wandering around the paddock in team shirts with passes swinging around their necks and decided they fancy a slice of the action. Truth is it is a great industry to be involved in - whether you're a truck driver, mechanic, rider or even a horribly hungover hack - but it also involves a lot of hard work and can easily take over your life. Endless motorway miles, countless hours in cold workshops, lap-after-lap of a rain-lashed practice track - the reality looking out is very different from the fantasy looking in.

That's not to say I blame anyone for wanting to get a job in the wonderful world of off-road – it's a great place to be - and I wouldn't blame anyone for failing to see through the good bits to the graft that goes on behind the scenes. Even people who should know better can be blinded to that... A few weeks ago I spent a day in the Brecon Beacons as a guest of Simon Pavey's Beemer-backed Off-Road Skills outfit and after a morning of blatting about the Welsh forests on an assortment of German metal we stopped for lunch.

"You lot have got a great job," I said to one of the instructors, spraying him with half-chewed ham, "tanking round the fireroads all day - beats working for a living!" "You think so?" he replied. "You wouldn't say that if you'd just had to pick the same bike up off the same rider for the 20th time in the pouring rain - and when you're on your way home I'll just be starting to wash the bikes." Then he stopped, thought for a second about the impending afternoon of tanking round the fireroads and his face split into a big sh*t-eating grin.

'Yeah, it's a great job!"



DRY ON TRACK

BRITISH GP PLANS GET THUMBS UP AFTER OPEN DAY

Words and photos by Pondo

Then the FIM made the official public announcement on January 26 that the British GP would move from the scheduled venue of Foxhill to a newly-built track at Mallory Park, the response - particularly on internet motocross forums - was vocal and largely unanimous. Hardly anyone was happy with it.

It seemed like the GP was being booted around from venue to venue - there was no continuity, no respect for the traditions of the sport and the circuits seemed to be turning more and more into outdoor supercross tracks. Behind the anonymity of an online username it was easy to be vitriolic and I'll be the first to put my hand up and say that I was among the critics.

But event organisers RHL, led by Gareth Hockey, weathered the storm of protests and doggedly, patiently and with well-reasoned restraint went about arguing their case with Gareth even starting a weekly column in T+MX

to keep everyone posted on the latest developments. In the face of some pretty spicy comments they explained why the event was at Mallory and even went as far as to invite suggestions from the MX-going public as to what they would like to see at the GP, what they wouldn't like to see and how the whole thing could be made to work better.

This 'consultation' process came to a head in April when RHL threw open the doors of the Leicestershire circuit to the public. The day kicked off with a discussion about people's wants and hopes for the GP - question number one, predictably enough, concerned beer and its adequate provision. But one thing remained constant throughout the conference - every question asked, every opinion offered, every request made was given serious consideration. In that room, as the organisers of the British Grand Prix sat with members of the public, changes were made to the organisation of the



IRISH VENUE GETS THE FIM THUMBS UP

GP itself. It was an astonishingly open meeting. Outside only a third of the track was marked and ready to be ridden (and the surface was far from the finished article) but between showers a handful of invited GP stars including Billy MacKenzie and Mike Brown turned laps along with members of the public and press. And despite the conditions the responses were generally positive – it's definitely not the bland jump-fest of Donington.

Although the objective was to get thoughts and opinions from members of the general public, as a PR exercise it's also been a great success. And far from being a purely commercial venture from an organisation concerned principally with lining their own pockets, the lengths that RHL have gone to to get the views of the motocross public onboard have shown how much they want this to work as a viable, long-term home for the British Grand Prix.

t's not just the British GP that has been bounced about over the last few years, the Irish GP has also been rattling around looking for a permanent home. And after world championship rounds in recent years at Ballykelly, Desertmartin and Moneyglass, all the signs are positive for the new venue at Fairyhouse Race Circuit on the outskirts of Dublin.

Youthstream track designer Greg Atkins and FIM race director Dave Nicoll have now inspected the Fairyhouse site and were impressed enough to agree that the venue would set new standards both in spectator and trackside facilities.

The last time world championship motocross was held in the Republic of Ireland was all the way back in 1996 when Dave's son Kurt came out on top of a 250cc battle at Vernon Mount in Cork. Now it looks

set for repeated visits as part of a threeyear deal.

The meeting and inspection tour was very successful and it has set in place a very sound foundation for not only this year's grand prix but for the grands prix that will follow in 2009 and 2010," says CoC Tony Skillington. "I am delighted to be acting as clerk of the course for what is my home GP. I am especially happy to be working with a group of really dedicated motocross people for this event who are all working extremely hard to make this year's GP a major success."

Construction of the track will now begin in earnest with work expected to be completed in July in plenty of time for homologation of the circuit for the event on August 30/31.

We'll see you there...



008 RM125 MUST BE WON!

was up for high-revvin', sweet-sounding two-strokes. But reports of their death were greatly exaggerated and in the right hands a stroker's still a potent weapon - go to any club meeting and you'll get a whiff of pre-mix and thanks to the DEP championship there's even a high-profile race series dedicated to two-smokers.

For the second year on the trot we've joined forces with Suzuki GB to offer one lucky reader the chance to win a brand-spankingly-new yellow rocketship - this time around it's a RM125! And what's more, if you win - and you're fast enough - you could even earn a place in the Suzuki RM125cc Cup and have a chance at winning a 2009 model at the DEP series finale. That's what's known in the trade as a double bonus!

The competition kicks off in this month's mag, continues in our July issue and then signs off in

ot so very long ago it looked like the game August. In each of the three special competition editions we'll be asking a simple Suzuki-related question - all you have to do is work out the correct answer, send it in and keep your pinkies crossed.

Each correct answer is a valid entry so if you miss a competition issue you can still enter and, even better, if you get all three competition issues you get three separate shots at winning the RM125! That's what's known in the trade as a triple bonus!

You can either wait until the August issue and stuff all your entries into one envelope or just send your entries in one at a time - all we ask is that entries are submitted on official entry forms so no computer scans, photocopies or crayoned efforts etc!

Don't miss next month's DBR for your second chance to win!

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QUESTION #1

WHICH SUZUKI RIDER WON THE '07 WORLD MX1 CHAMPIONSHIP?

A) Steve Ramon

B) Erik Eggens

C) Kevin Strijbos

D) Sean Hamblin

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PROON CROCKARD

YEEHAW!

GORDY'S COMING OVER ALL COUNTRY AND WESTERN - IT'S GOT TO BE THE WORKLOAD GETTING TO HIM..

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Sutty

owdy y'all! I'm finding it hard to get started with writing this as there's so much to tell but no way of telling it without getting fired! That's the thing with being a professional contractor - it tests your ability to bite your lip and to not shoot your mouth off about the factors you wish you could let everyone know about. All you see is the race result and that's all the information you have to judge me on but sometimes you'll find that behind those printed results lies so much more to the overall challenge of the race.

It's amazing and has been amazing right from the minute I set foot in what the American people like to call 'The Greatest Nation In The World'. Strikes me as a little bit strange how they know that seeing as only 17 per cent of American citizens hold passports which means 83 per cent of them have never been outside of the States to ever know. Again, I mustn't slabber as I'm on their soil and shouldn't bite the hand that feeds me.

I now have a mechanic working on my bikes - his name is Jeff Burnette and he's from North Carolina but has moved up to Cincinnati in Northern Kentucky to be at Scott Summers Inc HQ. This is a big help for me as I can concentrate on training now and be well in the knowledge I can trust that Jeff will do a good job in making sure my bike is prepared for the race. He's a former MX and woods racer himself and has owned a couple of Husqvarnas in his time so I'm lucky to have him.

I had a busy week testing at the beginning of the month. We did a non-championship race and used it as a test - I finished second and achieved what we needed from the test. The next day I rode in the rain all day testing suspension and engine caseguards. The next day I had to test the duration of a 14.8 litre fuel tank which runs for two hours and 45 minutes in

case you were wondering. Husqvarna sent a factory mechanic over from Italy to test engines and suspension for two days, dawn to dusk so that took me up to Friday. And then I made a seven-hour journey to South Carolina to race the fourth round of the GNCC championship. On Monday I was tired!

I've been working with Wyatt Seals on suspension since the last race and it's a pleasure to get to do that. He's very good and a super-nice guy. I can remember him from when he worked for Jeremy McGrath and then in Europe when he came over to mechanic for Ryan Hughes at Pamo Honda. He has a cool bicycle shop and I was able to buy a Cannondale mountain bike from him which I need for my training programme. I've been lucky to have a trainer sponsor me over here who has drawn up a nutrition plan and training programme.

My work visa application has been approved in the States but I must return to my country of residence and sit a two-hour interview in the US Embassy in Belfast before it can be fully passed and granted. Since I don't have it yet I can't 'work' and that means I can't be paid so I must thank a very good sponsor of mine for continuing with their company advertising methods. KP Equipe have backed me again and you'll see the KP Equipe logos on my crash helmet for the second year in a row now. I'm proud to be associated with them again and grateful for their continued support. Thanks guys!

Finally, a quick note to THE greatest nation in the world (Northern Ireland). I'll be home to see you all at the North West 200 road race on May 17. Be ready, I'll be on a mission! Yeehaw!

FAME ACADEMY

THE NEW Ride MX Academy was launched at the end of April at Apex Motocross Park by speedway star Carl Harris with Sky Sports News turning out to interview the Coventry Bees captain along with team riders and top coach Rikki Priest.

The academy now has a 19-strong team of riders aged between 6-19 years old. Most compete in the BYMX and BSMA nationals and all are trained by former British championship contender Rikki. "We want to be able to support and help up and coming talent," explains Ride MX boss Paul Wood, "and the academy is a great way of putting something back into the sport at a grassroots level. I wish them the best of luck throughout the 2008 season.

The team – supported by Thor MX, Zero Nine, Madison Sports and Monster Energy – is currently on the look-out for new talent. If you'd like to be involved as a rider or sponsor email Paul at paulw@ridemx.co.uk

For more details of Rikki's one-on-one and group coaching sessions hook up to www.mxcoach.co.uk



THE FIRST two rounds of the DEP Pipes Two-Stroke British Championship have been a showcase for world class racing.

Round one at Canada Heights is hit with heavy snow on race day morning - just as the Maxxis was a fortnight before – but while the snow stopped as the racing began for the thumper boys, for the DEP series it just gets heavier and heavier...

Jonathan Pettit wins the first (and what subsequently becomes the only) 125 A moto with a race of pure brilliance, riding smart and making his own lines ahead of reigning 125 champion David Willet and Jack Brunell in third while local boy Mark Eastwood wins the 250s, again ahead of double-entered Ironman Willet. But one block of racing is enough as conditions become utterly appalling.

Round two brings the series to Landrake and a touch of Sunday morning drizzle is nothing in comparison! Pettit maintains his 100 per cent record with a trio of wins - even when he doesn't get the best of starts the veteran rides smart and has the pace to run everyone down.

In contrast, the Open class appears to be less, er, open. Defending champ Easty and Willet are the class of the field with Mark having the upper hand after the first two races. For race three, however, the Ironman is red-hot - Mark leads from the start but Willet closes the gap, applies the pressure and finally makes a move around the outside.

For a couple of laps Eastwood seems to hold a watching brief before launching a counter attack of his own. But it's to no avail - Willet is as utterly determined as Eastwood and he sweeps to his first win of the day.



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PHEN **SWORD**

A PODIUM IN SPAIN, MAJOR POINTS IN PORTUGAL, THE OVERALL AT TORRINGTON – SWORDY'S GETTING BACK TO HIS WINNING WAYS

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Ray Archer

oohoo! what a month! It's been a good one on the racing front and a busy one too with all the travelling involved. Valkenswaard was the first stop. It was finally here, the one that I'd been training for so long for, the opening GP of the season...

I drove out on Friday morning - I had to be there for 2pm as Kawasaki had their launch of all the GP teams at the track. It was a big set-up and the teams had to make sure all the bikes were there and the riders had to prepare a one-minute speech. I didn't manage to prepare anything so I had to do it off the cuff - luckily, it came out well. Lots of press were there along with the big chiefs from Japan and Youthstream president Giuseppe Luongo.

Weather and track conditions were not good after heavy rain Friday night - very rutty, boggy and only one good line. My heat race was tough as I went down three times on the first lap but I had good speed and was able to get back into the top 10 to qualify and was feeling good for Sunday. Race one was almost a repeat of Saturday. I got caught up in a first lap pile-up then crashed again big while coming through. End of race and no points - not the start I was looking for. Race two was better with a seventh place and 14 points but still a little less than I was hoping for.

The next weekend was Torrington, round three of the British. Again, conditions were wet but the result was good. I took my first British championship win of the season and my first for over two years. It felt great and was a good boost for my confidence. I also kept the red plate and extended my lead in the championship something I don't plan on giving up. The drive home that night was that little bit sweeter than normal, a great feeling.

Spain was the next stop at a track that I really like. On Saturday track conditions were perfect - nice and tacky. I had another hard heat race and came from the back to qualify but felt positive about Sunday. Rain, rain and more rain was all that we had on Sunday. I cannot explain how bad the conditions were - the track was flooded with massive pools of water worse than I've ever seen before. I got a top 15 start in race one but crashed on the second lap, it was

difficult just to get round never mind trying to race. My goggles were off from lap one so that was a problem as well. I just focused on staying consistent each lap and pulled my way through to fourth at the finish.

Between races I spent most of the time rinsing my eyes out as they were full of mud. The conditions for race two were much worse. I led the race briefly but crashed and again the goggles were off on lap one. I crashed a couple more times but was one of the few that were consistently getting round. They red-flagged the race two laps early and when I got round to the finish I was directed to the podium. What a feeling again! My first GP podium since 2005! I couldn't see anything but who cares - I was on the box and third overall!

It was good to give the team something back as they have been working flat-out for the past few weeks and with the weather conditions the way they've been it's not easy for my mechanic, especially in between motos when there's not a great deal of time to get everything ready.

I flew home Sunday night ready for a good week's riding and training before Portugal and to clean up all that dirty kit. I spent all morning power washing it down before whacking it in the washer. I left Thursday night for Portugal as the flight on Friday morning was excessively early. It's another good track for me - I took my first race win there back in 2004. Weather conditions were a lot different - 35 degrees was just a little bit warmer than we've been used to this year. The track was in shape, my heat race went good and I finished fourth.

The weather would play a factor as it was pretty hot but I seem to do well in these conditions. On the Saturday evening there was a small get-together for Jean Jacque, the Michelin man. He is retiring from his job so it was farewell to him. Sorry to see him go and I wish him all the best for the future. I was aiming for another podium but just missed out with fourth overall. It was a good day for the points but I want to get closer to the leaders so I can challenge for race wins. I will work hard to achieve this...

Until next time hang loose and wide open. Braaaaaaap!



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ike it or not this off-road world of ours is about as far away from the mainstream as I am from a Pulitzer Prize. Ask your ■ average Joe who Billy Mac, Tommy Searle or David Knight are and be prepared for a glazed look before they hazard a guess "...were they in Big Brother 4?"...

Without the diehard fans who brave all sorts of weather and traffic chaos to see their heroes at work there would be no off-road sport so DBR grabbed a random father/son combo - Guy and Luke Smith – from the snowy autograph queue at a freezing Canada Heights to find their thoughts on motocross in general.

DBR: What do you do for a living?

GS: "I'm a commercial director. Motocross is a hobby - initially it was my hobby, now Luke's taken it up.'

DBR: Where have you travelled from this morning?

GS: "West Mersey near Colchester which is about an hour-and-a-half away."

DBR: How much do you think today will cost you if you include fuel, food and merchandise on top of your tickets?

GS: "For the two of us it will be getting on for about £100..."

DBR: Do you think you are getting good value for money?

GS: "I think we are, absolutely. For one it's a good day out, I mean the weather's not very good but it's still a great day, particularly for Luke as it's a good opportunity to watch the best riders, to see how they ride, to see how they push from the start of the race to the end of the race."

DBR: Do you both ride?

GS: "I used to ride, in fact I recently sold my KTM250F. I had a fall last season and hurt my back and haven't really got back into it. Luke's just turned nine and races a KTM65 having moved up from a 50cc last season so that takes up most of my time. Luke has two bikes that I have to look after so having my own just didn't work!"

DBR: How many meetings do you attend as spectators each season?

GS: "This is the first one we've been to this season as we tend to race ourselves most weekends and just don't get the opportunity. This one came along on an off weekend so we were straight here. We are going to definitely make the effort to go to as many as possible - I'd like to get to Desertmartin for example."

DBR: How long have you been fans of motocross?

GS: "Thirty years. My father used to scramble a BSA Bantam and he passed on his love of motocross to me. I rode, then dropped it due to work and family commitments, then took it up again...then dropped it again to support Luke!"

DBR: How far would you like to see Luke take this?

GS: "However far he wants to take it and I'll support him. You have to be guite tough with them sometimes but not too tough. If they fall off you need to get them straight back on the bike...it's quite hard sometimes."

DBR: Which is your favourite national track? GS: "Desertmartin...although Canada Heights is right up there with it, maybe just squeezed into second place."

DBR: Luke, tell us who you are rooting for today?

LS: "Stephen Sword."

DBR: Do you think he'll win the championship this year LS: "Ummm...he might!"

DBR: Put your neck on the line and give us your hot tips for the British MX1 and MX2 champions this season.

GS: "Let's go for Swordy in MX2 and Billy Mac in MX1."

DBR: What will your day consist of?

GS: "We try and get here as early as possible so we can take our time and really take in the spectacle and atmosphere, especially for Luke. Hopefully he can get to meet some of the riders

and get to see how the teams are set up, watch the practice and make a whole day of it...whether we make it to the end of today is another thing though!"

DBR: Is it good form to pick one spot on the fence or move around between motos?

GS: "We spend a bit of time looking for a good spot and then keep going back to it.

DBR: How would you convince someone who's never been to a motocross meeting to give it a try?

GS: "It's exciting, it's people who are on the edge but having a good time. I'd tell them to come along and feel the atmosphere for themselves. It's one of the few sports where at this level you can get close to the top people which is great."

DBR: Does it annoy you that motocross isn't more mainstream?

GS: "I have to say that I like it as it is because it's kind of niche, that's why you can still get up close to the teams and the atmosphere is as it is. If it became a two-wheel version of Formula One it just becomes way out of reach to everyone, you sit way back in the stands and I think that would be a step backwards for MX."

DBR: As a Brit what do you think of some of our top prospects leaving for the US?

GS: "It's unfortunate but they're riding for a living and they've got to do what's best for their career and if the best opportunity for them to progress and dominate is going to America then they've got to go. I don't think it's a decision made just by the rider - clearly they have employers, people backing them financially and so on."

DBR: What do you think needs to happen to keep the cream of the crop here?

GS: "I think that it's a bit of a double-edged sword. We've just been saying how we like MX in the UK with it not being too commercialised and you can get close up. I think the only way to keep the riders here is to make motocross bigger in the UK and I think for that to happen it would have to change considerably, meaning it became more distant from the fan and I don't think that's a good thing to do."



BILLY N'
BROWNE

MONSTER CAS HONDA'S BRITISH #1s BILLY MACKENZIE AND MIKE BROWN ON CLEANING FILTERS, IRRIGATING ROUNDABOUTS AND GETTING NAKED!

Words and photos by JP O'Connell

o you get a bit bored of hearing the same old podium spiel? Well we're sure those Dunlops/Michelins/Pirellis really do hook up but we want to give you an insight into the riders' real personalities. So armed with a handful of random questions we tracked down CAS Honda's British #1s Billy Mac and Mike Brown as the headliners for our new feature...

DBR: Who would play you in a film of your life?

BM: "That would have to be Begbie out of Trainspotting or James Bond."

MB: "Clint Eastwood."

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter?

BM: "About two weeks ago I went to go out on my practice bike and my brother had pinched all my filters so I had to clean one – although my dad did oil it, so it was a 50/50."

MB: "It's been a while. I think it was back in America some time last December as I'd run out of pre-oiled ones."

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?

BM: "Never, no! I think if I watched someone do it once I could learn but I've never had to..." **MB:** "Yep, no problem. I can split the motor so it's no big deal!"

DBR: Have you ever eaten anything you've killed?

BM: "No I haven't." MB: "Nope."

DBR: How many bones have you broken? BM: "Three in my foot, hand, collarbone, wrists

nine times between them so 14 in total!"

MB: "Just my collarbone. I've dislocated my shoulder and my wrist as well as damaging my ACL but as for bones that's it."

DBR: How many and where are your tattoos? **BM:** "No tattoos. If I win a world championship then I'll get one – I'm not sure what but it'll be something to do with being world champ and it'll

be f**king huge!"

MB: "I've got seven that are on my arms and shoulders."

DBR: It's the last lap, you're in second and right on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out in the last corner for the win?

BM: "Definitely...or before!"
MB: "It's happened, yeah!"

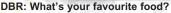
DBR: What car do you drive?

BM: "At the moment I have a VW Transporter as well as a f**ked up blue Mitsubishi pick-up!"
MB: "I have a Chevy van and a Chevy truck."

DBR: If money was no object what car would you drive?

BM: "A '67 Mustang Shelby like the one in Gone in 60 Seconds."

MB: "Probably a Bentley Continental GT. A Lamborghini or Ferrari would be nice but I've got a family so I've got to get them in there."



BM: "Pastry!"

MB: "Probably Italian."

DBR: If you weren't a motocrosser what would you be?

BM: *censored*

MB: "It's hard to know what you could have done – maybe an architect?"

DBR: Which is your favourite MX track?

BM: "The Isle of Wight."

MB: "That's a hard one. I'd say Budds Creek when it's not muddy or Southwick."

DBR: What's your ideal holiday?

BM: "On a really remote island with clear blue seas and white sand. I'd have to build my own little den out of trees and stuff to sleep in and there'd have to be a shady little café – not too expensive. Then I'd just sit on the beach with a nice girl and get quietly drunk in the sun."

BM: "Shoot, it's been so long. Probably take the family to Hawaii."

DBR: Have you ever been arrested?

BM: "Oh god! Yes!" BM: "Nope, never."

DBR: What's the most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk?

BM: "Oh man, there's just so many... I tend to get naked a lot!"

MB: "I've never been drunk [laughs], that's straight up truth. I'll sip on a glass of wine with my dinner but that's it."

DBR: What's your favourite band?

BM: "Kings of Leon."
MB: "Nickelback."

DBR: What's your best pick up line?

BM: "I use the straight forward approach. I ask them if they want to and if they don't I move on...it's about one in 10."

MB: "[Laughs] I'm quiet, they pick me up more than I'd pick them up — I don't know, I never say much."

DBR: How many sit-ups can you do?

BM: "I could go all day. Press-ups I couldn't do any but sit-ups are no problem."

MB: "I can just keep on doing them."

DBR: Can you cook and if so what's your signature dish?

BM: "I can get by. I can cook a good pasta and some nice roasted vegetables, stuff like that." **MB:** "Yeah I like cooking, just the basics though things like steak, chicken and salads."

DBR: How fast can you row 500m?

BM: "One minute and 30.1 seconds." **MB:** "I do use the rower but I've never timed myself over the 500, I will set a manual programme."

mano o mano

DBR: How long would you have to be seeing someone before you cut the cheese in front of her?

BM: "I don't ever do it – I really hate that, I always try and hide it. My ex used to do it all the time...it was foul!"

MB: "It just depends on how quick I got to know them...my wife it didn't take very long!"

DBR: What's your favourite film?

BM: "Not too sure about a film but my favourite TV show is Dexter."

MB: "Gladiator."

DBR: Where's the craziest place you've had to answer nature's call during your travels?

BM: "I was on my way down south and I was absolutely bursting but hadn't been able to stop and I got to this roundabout which was jammed, traffic lights and everything. It was so bad that while I was in the queue for the lights I had to bump the car up onto the kerb and take a p**s on the roundabout!"

MB: "I had to pull over on the side of the Interstate!"

DBR: Do you have any fears or phobias?

BM: "Spiders, moths...! hate effin' moths." **MB:** "Losing any memories of your family is a big fear."

DBR: What's the most embarrassing article of clothing you own?

BM: "I recently went to America and I bought this pair of white Timberland boots with white patches all over them. They're so pimp I'm just scared to wear them."

MB: "Probably some snakeskin cowboy boots I bought for a date with my wife which are still a big joke. I keep them for memorabilia and I'll get them out once in a while and walk around the house in those and my shorts!"

DBR: What's your most prized possession?

BM: "I've a chest of drawers that's full of cards and letters right back from when I was 10, you know from all the girls and friends that I've met. So those and my practice bike!"

MB: "It's my family, I don't get to see them that much at the moment."

DBR: Blonde or brunette?

BM: "Brunette."
MB: "Brunette."



BLARNEY

HIGHS AND LOWS!

ON HOME TURF THE ACTION'S ALREADY AWESOME BUT THINGS ARE NOT LOOKING SO HOT FOR THE BOYS ON THE MAINLAND IN THE MAXXIS...

Words by Stevie Mills Photo by Toby Fuller

new level of anticipation and intensity is now evident in the Irish motocross paddock this season, the teams and riders have worked hard during the winter months so let the games begin!

The home of Irish MX – Desertmartin – hosted round one of the championship under the backdrop of a perfectly (as always) prepared circuit, sunshine in abundance and possibly the best domestic race for many a year!

Another new generation of racers are ready to take the challenge to the 'old guard'. Why, it seems only yesterday that the fresh faces of Merton, Garrett and Sinton first appeared on the local circuit, playing a supporting role to the Lyons/McCullough battles that were to become synonymous with Ulster motocross until a few seasons ago. His dominance during the 2006 season pretty much retired McCullough – having won all four titles he found himself lacking motivation as his arch rival Lyons had hung up his boots to embrace business commitments.

Wayne Garrett, quadruple champion in 2007, will have his work cut out if he is to repeat his success in both classes this year. In retrospect, the '07 season was the Wayne and Tommy show with Sinton, Bird and McCamley scrapping it out for the last possible podium slot. The new 'elder statesman' is in no mood to tolerate these whipper-snappers and although overshadowed in the MX2 class, Wayne has stamped his authority all over the MX1 Irish/Ulster series so far. Wayne never looked in trouble throughout his double victory ride around Desertmartin – to be honest, after running a few 'sprint' laps he settled into cruise mode.

Gary Gibson is enjoying racing the MX1 bike and it showed with 4-2 results good enough for second overall. RS Freight runner Richard Bird rode well for third on the day and recovered from a slow start. Fourth in the standings is Ross Brown aboard his GOMX/Russell's 450 Suzuki. Not a sand specialist, Ross is eagerly awaiting racing on the hardpack tracks. Rounding out the top five is Garrett's team-mate Dave McCamley who capitalised on a good gate second time out to finish a fine third on his Moto-One By TAS Suzuki.

Posting 1- 4 finishes, Gary Gibson heads the MX2 table coming out of Desertmartin with Robert Hamilton taking time out from mainland UK commitments to find form currently in the runner-up spot. Ex-youth champ Philip Loughlin fills the third place slot and looked both fast and fit aboard his Kawasaki. Was this a flash in the pan result or the start of a title challenge?

The second MX2 race was simply the best race we have seen in a long time after a poor showing from Graeme Irwin and a DNF from Tommy Merton had discounted them from the opener. Neither Gibson, Loughlin or Stuart Edmonds – top three first time out – had an answer to Irwin or Merton, such was the pace at the front. Lap after lap they raced, swapping positions throughout with no quarter asked or given – it was a street fight with rules! Tommy gave the youngster room to race while Graeme was both cautious and courteous to the vastly-experienced Merton.

Tommy may have crossed the line first but it



was the sport of motocross that was the winner – the crowds in attendance were entertained and left baying for more of the same. Roll on round two!

On the British championship front things could be better – a lot better! Our single points scorer in MX1, Richard McKeown, suffered a horrible injury during his first ride at a Scottish championship round for his new Moto-One team. After following Bryan MacKenzie home in the first race it all went belly-up.

"My bike quit in the first corner in the second moto, someone hit me hard from behind which threw me over the handlebars and when I was on the ground I think my arm was hit by the footrest of a passing bike resulting in a broken wrist." This has put Richard's season back by at least two months – get well soon.

U-TAG Yamaha's Martin Barr is two points off second place in the British championship. A contender? You bet! But the Spanish GP dealt Martin a poor hand when a crash resulted in a

busted collarbone which has thrown a spanner into the works. It's all part of the game I know – let's hope Martin can get back into the saddle real soon.

Other Irish interest in Brit MX2 sees Stuart Edmonds in 30th with two points-scoring rides last time out giving credibility to the progress of the new TM 250F. Watch this space as the season progresses. Robert Hamilton, 33rd in the standings, is not where he needs to be on the Team Pioneer/Emberson Yamaha although he is showing signs of returning form and could serve up a surprise or two in the near future. We all know he has the talent and speed, he just needs to get his head back into the zone.

In the British MXY2 series Edward Allingham is flying the flag for PAR Homes Honda with third in the points table. Steven Smyth is 18th at present – we have witnessed Steve's speed recently at local races, this youngster is a winner when he slows down!



JONTY'S BOX



WELSH RABBIT!

WITH TWO MONTHS TO GO BEFORE THE WORLD'S BEST ENDURO RIDERS ARRIVE IN THE UK FOR ROUND FIVE OF THE '08 WEC SERIES, HERE ARE A FEW GOOD REASONS TO BE HEADING FOR MID WALES IN MID JULY...

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

he '08 World Enduro Championship is turning into one of the most exciting and hotly-contested WEC series since the turn of the century. Fact.

With three rounds now complete the Swedish snow, Portuguese mud and Spanish dust ensured some of the closest racing action the WEC has seen in a long, long time. And the good news for British enduro fans is that by the time the WEC arrives in the UK on July 19/20 that action will be even closer which means it'll also be well, well worth watching.

At the start of '08 it looked as if the closest championship battle would be the Enduro 2 fight between Finn Juha Salminen and Frenchman Johnny Aubert. No-one really knew what would happen in Enduro 3 and as far as the Enduro 1 class was concerned, well, many predicted that Mike Ahola would win in Sweden before Ivan Cervantes rose to the top in Portugal and Spain. Some predictions were correct, others not...

What the three opening rounds of this year's WEC series have delivered has been some of the best enduro racing seen in a long time. Experienced championship campaigners and WEC newcomers alike have shown each other no mercy as they try to establish themselves as the very best in '08. If the remaining rounds of the '08 WEC series are half as good as the first three then the championship will long be remembered for all the right reasons.

So what will make the rest of the series - and the British round of the WEC - so good? The battle for the E2 world championship title between Salminen and Aubert that's what.

Oh and the scrap between Ahola, Cervantes and championship for one-and-a-half years, Knight Simone Albergoni for the E1 crown.

The Aubert vs Salminen battle was developing into a great one before Juha DNFed day one of the GP of Spain. Now it'll be even better. Juha knows he has to win, win, win if he is to keep his hopes of an eighth world title alive which will bring out the very best in the KTM-mounted Finn.

The only overseas rider who'll really know what to expect from the Hafren Dirt Bike Club-organised event having won the club's BEC round last year, Juha will also know that at the end of the event if he's more than a handful of points behind Aubert in the E2 title chase his chances of the title will be all but over. Juha will fight harder to win the GP of Wales than any rider. His performances are not to be missed

Aubert on the other hand knows that he must make the most of the points advantage he now has. Pushing Juha harder on occasions this season than any other rider has during Salminen's long and illustrious career, Johnny is hungry for his first world title. He too will want to win in Wales before heading to his home GP the following weekend.

But if watching Salminen and Aubert duel it out over two days isn't enough of a reason to travel to Llanidloes then consider this - David Knight will also be competing in the Enduro 2 class. Planning on making a one-off WEC outing during his US GNCC summer break, Knight is under no pressure whatsoever to do anything other than enjoy himself. Undoubtedly a little enduro rusty having not raced in the world

will nevertheless be out to show that his speed and enthusiasm for enduro is everything it was before he started applying his trade in the States. One thing's for certain - David won't simply be competing to make up the numbers.

Then there's the battle to be king of the E1 class. With the fight between Ahola and Cervantes at the recent GP of Spain one of the closest ever seen in the WEC the nearness of competition in the E1 class - something that's been missing from the WEC's smallest capacity class for some time - is ensuring that the drama that fills this year's series isn't restricted to just E2.

With Ahola proving that he can ride a 250cc four-stroke as well as he rode a 450 last season, with Albergoni now believing in his ability to win races and with Cervantes as fast as ever. the E1 class is turning into a true battle royal. Think you've seen 100 per cent commitment? Not until you've seen Mika and Ivan pushing each other to the absolute limit you haven't.

The fact that this year will see the first ever GP of Wales is surely reason enough not to miss the event that will stand head and shoulders above all other British enduro events this year and most likely for many years to come. When you throw into the mix the titanic battle between Salminen and Aubert for the E2 world title, add a handful of homegrown stars - including Knighter - all wanting to achieve the very best they can on home soil, well, if you're an enduro fan you'd be a fool to be anywhere else but mid Wales on the third weekend of July...





LEATT LOLLY

First things first! I'm sure everyone's just as excited as me that the des Nations are coming to Britain! Wahey! But the main reason I'm writing to you is to raise a very important issue. We're seeing more and more Leatt Braces on top riders which is a great sign that they are taking safety seriously.

But the Leatt isn't a cheap peace of kit! I almost fainted when I saw the price of one. So I had to settle for a bog-standard neck roll which to be honest isn't nice to ride with but as a young rider I can't afford anything fancy. And now with Fro's brace off the market the Leatt is the only one of its kind. I hate to be a bit of an old grump about the pricing but 300 quid is a bit hefty isn't it?

Oh yeah, I saw Mr Walker at the WOR Tough One! He's much taller than I expected - my friend was itching to ask him if he would like a Rich Tea just to see what he'd say (but he didn't want to disturb him before the race). Me and my friend love Geoff's tech bits and bobs in the mag.

Rhys, Caernarfon PS Love the new look! Very Nice!

The people behind the Leatt Brace would say that the price reflects the cost of development and marketing etc although we reckon it's safe to say there will be a nice little profit built into the RRP. And it is pretty expensive but there are obviously plenty of people willing to pay the going rate for one or it wouldn't be so successful. The good news is there's also a budget Leatt in the pipeline and Alpinestars are about to come out with their own brace as well.

Admittedly, the Alpinestar brace is also expensive but the more there are on the market, the cheaper they'll become.

the cheaper they'll become.

Cheers for the comments about the mag and next time you see Walker you must offer him a biscuit – just be prepared to see enough Rich Teas to cover the cost of a Leatt Brace disappear down his neck!

KO KAY!

Do I really have to watch another MXGP being ruined by Kenny Kay's (champion of nothing, especially commentating) absolutely awful, most annoying commentating?

I suppose I could turn the sound off but it's not the same - you need to hear the roar of the engines. Unfortunately, it's being drowned out by dribble – is it just me that suffers with this problem and is there a cure or antidote? I think I have suffered enough!

John, via email

There's certainly no dead air when Kenny's about! Not 'alf...

FREESTYLE PHIL

While midway through buying my Friday night collection of penny chews in ASDA I picked up your mag - I always do to have a look if you guys have any FMX inside (apart from in a shoe ad) - and I was well stoked to see some boys have made a ramp and are hitting it! You see, FMX is in the UK!

Even though we never see it in the country's mags, the FMX community is growing every day with kids building ramps all over the place but the UK seems to be so single-minded - race, race, race, blah, blah, blah. The amount of young 'uns who stopped by for a chat at the Dirt Bike Show when they saw my bike on the Osiris stand was unbelievable and we get loads of visitors to my team's myspace profile asking how to get into the underground 'sport' of FMX. It makes me feel good that slowly the revolution has begun and we have a future generation of crazy cats wanting to be part of it!

I know that you as a magazine feel obliged to look after the majority of readers (racers) but the British freestyle motocross scene is now big enough to deserve a page or two in your magazine from time to time, even if it will make middle-aged chief marshals choke in disgust on their cheese sandwiches and drop their Thermos flasks in the mud on a Sunday! And who knows, maybe your sales will rise in the future as us guys won't have to search down the latest US mag to have a read up on our 'sport'?

Anyone wanting info and help starting up should get on the web and find us at myspace.com/eastcoastfreestyle...

Phil, Ipswich

PS You guys are right, John Pearson is an absolute legend!

You hit the nail on the head there Phil, we do major on racing because that's what floats the majority of our readers' boats. But we do run FMX stories and have supported the British jump monkeys since Gary Taylor, Chris Brock and Jamie Squibb first started making headlines in Y2K...

TECH TOUCH

Hey, I'm Gwion from Wales and I ride a YZ two-smoker and I compete in hare n' hounds with WOR Events. I think they are a great club! Do you know where I can get hold of some replaceable sole inserts for my Alpinestars Tech 7s because they get eaten up by my pegs?

Gwion, Wales

Hello Gwion from Wales! The Tech 7 inserts are available from Racespec (www.racespec.co.uk) for about £15.

WHAT WHEELS?

I have my bike test and have ridden road bikes for many years and now I'd like to try off-roading! I am, however, very confused about which is the best model to go for. I would like to do enduro and hare and hound events and possibly a bit of green laning but also want a bike on which I could very occasionally travel to work (around eight miles).

I am looking to spend a grand on a bike -£1500 tops. The articles I've read have given me a clear idea of bikes suitable for serious motocross and for road use with a bit of green laning but I feel I'm after something in between and am very confused as to which is the best option.

Keith, via email

There are loads of bikes that are competitive off-road that will happily soak up a bit of commuting action but your budget will play a big factor in what you get. Pick up a copy of Trials and Motocross News, check out the enduro section in the classifieds and see if you can find a road registered bike that fits the bill.

YAMAHAGGIS!

Hey fit like guys (that's Scottish slang for how's it going!)? I thought I would write this letter in some Scottish jibberish just to make you guys laugh and stare at the screen wondering what the hell this Scot is going on about! Ha ha so enjoy! Maybe get a couple laughs out of some bewildered readers!

Richti'o, well all just start aff by saying great magazine guys bin reading her for a whiley and ah still love it! Ony woo! Ah wiz humming'n' haying aboot changing my bike ti a four-popper ken! Av a two-stroker inoo! A YZ125 n mighty aye she's a fast hing! She just aboot wheeched me aff I bach een day! Ha ha! So aye! Wiz just wondering far I cid get a hud'o a Yamaha dealership in Scotland that cid sell me a Yamaha YZF250 for a gid price! ken! Hope ye can ge us a han!

Andy, via email

We've run your letter by Billy Mac to translate and he reckons you're looking for a Scottish Yamaha dealer – right? Well according to the Yamaha website your nearest official dealer is Ride On Motorcycles in Glasgow – give them a bell on **0141 424 0404.**

CHEERS!

This is on behalf of my 27-year-old profoundly deaf brother-in-law Adam. Would it be possible to print just a small thanks in the next copy to say how much joy this mag gives him?

Helen, Cardiff



GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? WELL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address. Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!

LETTERS WIN PRIZES

Write to Rant, get your letter published and you'll win a one-litre trigger bottle of marvellous bike cleaning fluid Muc-Off. And if we rate your letter highly enough you'll also receive our monthly star prize - this month a pair of Etnies Calli-vulc shoes.



CHARGE CLOTHING TIP-TOP Ts Established in 2004 by lifelong MX fan Andrew Bliss and business partner Paul Taylor, Charge clothing has been supporting motocross riders since the get-go with the likes of Elliott Banks-Browne, Jake Nicholls, Aston Bird and Jason Dougan all slipping into the company's tip-top Ts at one time or another. Official casualwear sponsors of the Bolddog freestyle team, Charge have a huge selection of super-sweet t-shirts to choose from with a range of polos, sweaters, hoodies, hats and boxers coming soon. **RENTHAL** Supplier: Charge clothing Contact: chargeclothing.com INTELLILEVER

First came shatterproof rulers (not half as fun as the

on-the-fly adjuster.

Price: £99.95 (£119.95 with hotstart)

Supplier: B&C Express/CI Sport
Contact: bandcexpress.co.uk/cisport.co.uk

First came shatterproof rulers (not half as tun as the old-school versions that would rain razor-sharp plastic shrapnel around the science lab) and now Renthal have upped the ante with what they claim to be the world's first 'truly unbreakable lever'. CNC-machined from 6061 billet ally, in a crash the lever can pivot 90 degrees forwards, upwards or downwards meaning you can finish your race without desperately clawing at a little stub on the bars. Available with or without an integrated hotstart lever, the perch also has an on the five adjuster.

NO-TOIL SUPER-FLO FILTER KIT

While they may stop your beloved steed's filter from going up in flames (hurrah), backfire screens stifle air flow and rein-in horsepower (boo, hiss). One way round this is to cut out the screen – all well and good until a hot spark literally lights a fire under your arse – but another, more sensible solution, is to fit a No-Toil Super-Flo Filter Kit.

A complete replacement for your stock filter and cage, the Super-Flo Kit features a flame-resistant filter and the lack of backfire screen means loads more ponies to play with and no mid-mote inferno threatening to singe your hairy boys! Double bonus! The kits fit almost all makes of modern motorsickle and the filters carry No-Toil's famous one-year warranty. Double, double bonus!

Price: Filter Kit: £49.99 replacement filters: £16.99 Supplier: Madison Contact: 0800 1300 598/ultimatepursuits.co.uk



RENTHAL

RC-1 WORKS BRAKE PADS

If you need to stop in a hurry without resorting to an uncontrolled collision with the nearest tree/jump face/burger van then you should check out Renthal's RC-1 Works Brake Pads. Designed specifically for MX and other forms of off-road specifically for Mix and other forms of orline ad racing, they perform excellently come rain or shine and according to Renthal their quick bed-in time and progressive feel offer the user unparalleled brake feedback.

Price: £19.30
Supplier: B&C Express/CI Sport
Contact: bandcexpress.co.uk/cisport.co.uk



ALPINESTARS

BIONIC NECK SUPPORT

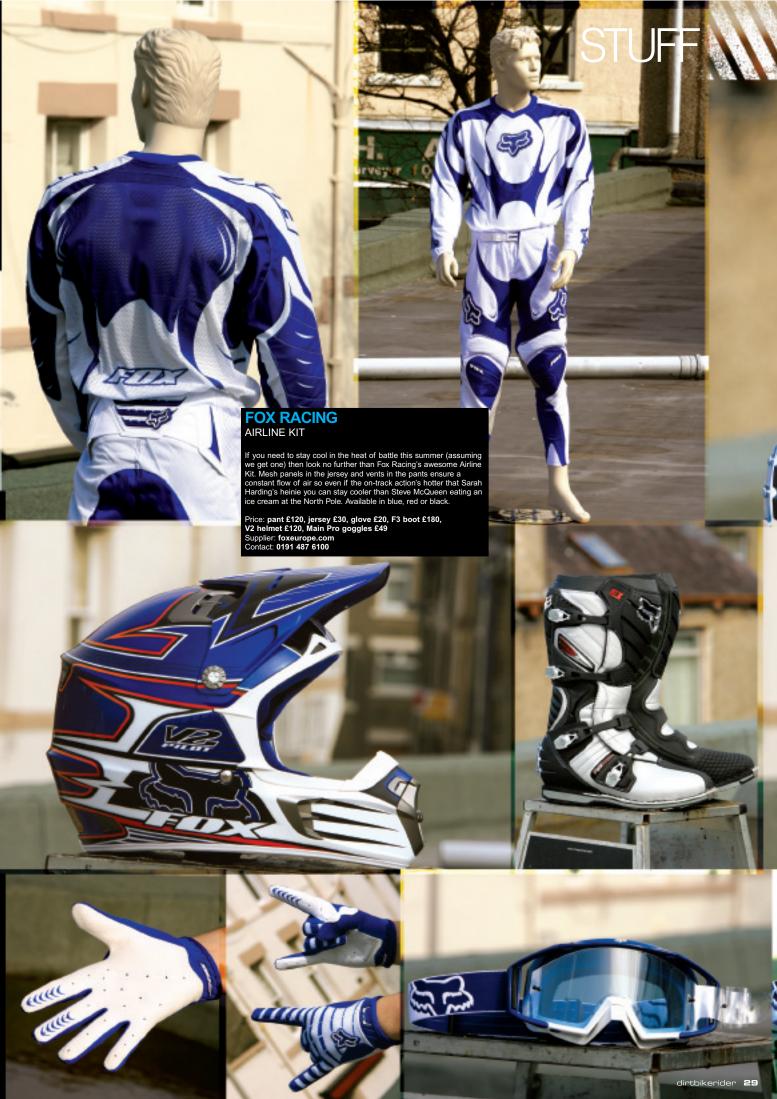
Back in ye olde days of scrambling – when bikes weighed about the same as a small boat and safety equipment consisted of little more than a flat-cap, bushy sideburns and a roll-up – the closest thing to neck protection was an army-issue scarf. These days we're thankfully a little more clued up and neck braces (along with things like helmets and boots) are a common sight on tracks around the world.

Alpinestars are the latest company to bring out a brace with their Bionic Neck Support conjuring up images of – depending on your generation – Lee Majors in a red tracksuit running really fast or the much more pleasing

Lee Majors in a red tracksuit running really fast or the much more pleasing sight of Michelle Ryan in something tight and leather, er, running really fast. Anyway, we digress...

Available from mid-August, the BNS works by providing an alternative load path at the moment of impact and also helps reduce extreme head movement. In the event of a heavy crash the support has a number of built-in bending and fracture points to stop extreme loads being transmitted down your back. It's also easy to slip on and off thanks to a clever front opening design and comes in S, M and L in either black or red. M and L in either black or red.

Price: £439.95 Supplier: alpinestars.com Contact: racespec.co.uk





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nyone who thought Shaun Simpson's lightning start to 2007 was a flash in the pan has been put firmly in their place this year as the 20-year-old Scot has proved himself one of the fastest

men in the Maxxis MX2 series and raced the factory boys head-on at world level. It's an even more impressive start than last year - but can the boy keep it up?

Yeah, I hope so. Last year I started off good but it tailed off mid-season. This year the bike's good and I'm in as good condition as I possibly can be so I see no reason why we can't keep it up this year and make some good results that's definite!"

Shaun's another year older and wiser and for '08 he's on a KTM after 2007's hit-and-miss season aboard a hit-and-miss Kawasaki.

"We came to Valkenswaard last year and the bike was good. But we had a few small wee problems that weekend and after that the bike wasn't so good. The engine we got through Gepa was good for a race but then the valves didn't sit properly. It wasn't just a matter of cost, we simply didn't know anybody who could do the valve seats for us because you had to take the old ones out and replace them. They were bad material.

"After that we were on a standard bike and later in the season it was bogging and we were having problems with the heat. By then we had found a tuner in Holland but we are convinced it was not due to his work. Certainly we have had no problems with the KTM motor he has tuned

for us this year. I think some freak things happened last year, we got some bad fuel in Italy and things like that."

And it was the bogging which was the root cause of the ultimate slump to 24th in the world rankings.

"Confidence in the bike was a major part last year. You can't go out to race, start with it fine but know that it might start bogging halfway through the race with the heat or something. We couldn't put our finger on it. We went all the way to Bulgaria, we tried the spare bike, everything. But you can't leap off the hillsides at Bellpuig, Sevlievo or Faenza wondering if the bike is going to bog.

"Faenza was when it really went downhill. I got a good start - my best of the year - and was running around eighth place, went off a jump and it just bogged. I had no way to save it. I got up straight away but I knew something was wrong with my right wrist. I'd had a few niggling injuries - everyone gets those and you ride through them - but you can't twist the throttle with a broken wrist.

That really set us back. I was back on the bike for the Irish and British GPs but you can't just come back at this level from a month off. And Lierop is the not the place to go into when you're not fit. My confidence was already low with the bike and the injury was the final straw. It was a great pity because the way I started off the year was good enough to get me top 10 and I felt that was a realistic aim.

And in '08 on a KTM it is rapidly becoming more than just an aim!

But for a damaged fuel hose in the Donington opener Shaun would be leading the Maxxis and even a fall could not prevent him making top six in the opening GP. And despite the interest his results have stirred up at Mattighofen, they've all come on a tuned SXS against the mega-bucks

"KTM UK have given us the bikes and a spares allowance. We started off with SXS, then we have worked on it ourselves with our tuner, Volleberg Motorsport in Holland. Our new workshop is only two doors down from him, he has all the machines to do the job properly and we have had no problems whatsoever this year the bikes are A1.

"The way KTM work you can get factory stuff if you're doing good enough and we now have a good WP shock organised by Pit Beirer. It's not full factory but it's the next level up from SXS. The help is there from KTM. If you're going good they'll give you the parts and we're on the junior programme now with all the bonuses. We don't have full factory but the standard KTM is already an excellent bike and what we have is good enough to get results.

"I think it shows that KTM genuinely want to help the young riders come though and they're going to help the guys who are doing the job and who they think can do the job. And I appreciate what they are doing for us. They make you feel part of the family and it's a boost to know the factory is behind you. The last few years we've been doing it off our own back, buying bikes, buying spares - at good prices but buying them. And we are on bonuses so there are always







IRISHCONNECTION A DIAMOND MAGEEZER FROM

"This is our fourth year with Roger [Magee]. He's helped us out from the start in '05, he's spot-on. We were in a mess when Tim Chambers had to close his team at the last minute and Roger helped us out big time, I have to take my hat off to him. He's stood by us but I think we've done a good job for him too.

"I don't know exactly what Roger gets out of it – I think he's quite tied down with his street lighting business at home during the week and just enjoys getting away at the weekend. But when he gets here he's flat-out too but he's always loved motocross. That's just how motocross people are.

"We haven't had an unlimited budget like a factory but we have built gradually. The first year we basically just had the truck and the bikes though RWJ helped us out with parts, '06 we became more self-contained but Roger was still buying everything at cost and last year was pretty much the same except that we had a base to work from. This year KTM UK and Red Bull have come in to join Discover Ireland and have the budget to do things properly. We can rebuild engines when we want, not leaving anything to chance.

Roger has been in the sport since the early '70s. "I've known Willie for many years – we even raced against each other, although I wasn't quite as good as he was – and he had ridden for me in the Irish Nations teams over the years too

"It was at the Dublin SX four years ago that they told me of their predicament and when Shaun passed Gordon on the last lap in one of the heats it really underlined that he really wanted to do this and had

"That's how it started and Shaun has co<mark>nt</mark>inue<mark>d to</mark> p<mark>rogres</mark>s so <mark>w</mark>e wanted to carry on and take him to the next level which is the way we seem to be headed at the moment. There is a lot of mutual trust, they tell me what they need and I try to organise it - I know they are never asking for anything unless they need it to move on."



CLOSEKNIT

Notice how often Shaun says "we"? He does the riding but it's very much a team effort with dad Willie driving the truck, younger brother Stefan spinning the spanners and mum Vanda keeping them all fed and watered.

So how's Stefan, working away next to us as we chat, getting on as race mechanic?

"He's getting there. He's still young but he's learning all the time. Just keep an eye on him and he's doing a good job," grins Shaun. "You can have a rear-up one minute and the next minute you're family again, it's sorted. I think we work well together. The brother thing, I think we know each other inside out and you know you can have implicit faith in each other."

Stefan is also a handy rider as the lads he put over a berm in a rare outing in Ulster at the end of last year can testify to but he has no ambitions to join Shaun on the line at a GP.

"No, I never wanted to be a GP rider. Shaun must have something in him that he wants to do it but I've not got that bug that I want to race, not at this level anyway. I love riding, I enjoy riding a local race but that's it. It was always that way - even when I started I used to be sick and so nervous before a race. I just don't have the buzz off racing. But I love being here and being a mechanic. I don't know if it's a good thing or a bad thing to work for your brother but it seems to work."



goals there, something to work for. That's how it should be."

The Simpsons are not afraid of hard work. Shaun has raced every week since Mantova and was in action twice at Easter – rushing off to Holland after Canada Heights – while others claim they need every third weekend off.

"It wasn't that we weren't satisfied with two wins at Canada Heights, we had it planned long before to get a ferry Sunday evening and drive through the night to Holland. It wasn't a successful day in terms of results – just a third place – but I had the same speed as Eggens and Van Horebeek, only I made a mess of both the starts and had to come through the pack. It's not easy to set good times in those circumstances but my speed was there and it was a good test for my fitness because the races were 35 minutes the day after I had already raced and I was pushing the whole way. And coming through the pack I was having to make passes, that was good practice too.

"I think the more you race at this time of the year is good for you – you need to get your starts, you need to get rid of the pressure. Everyone has a little bit of arm pump when it's cold at the start of the year and I think racing is the best form of practice. I'd rather race than go training somewhere on my own, just going round doing laps and getting bored. The Americans don't take weeks off, they're flat-out for 17 weeks out of 18 in the supercross and the only reason they have some time off during the Nationals is because there isn't a race to go to.

"Obviously I'm not wanting to be racing the weekend before South Africa because of the travelling involved but otherwise I want to carry on like this. I enjoy racing, I get a buzz out of

racing and I've never known anything else. That was the way dad did it, that's the way I've been brought up and we've just carried it on. And it seems to be working!"

And if it keeps on working there's presumably a place free next year in the factory team? "Yes, with Tommy going to America I suppose there is. It's something I've always dreamed of but I'm a guy who likes to keep his feet on the ground. First I have to work for it. But if there's a chance then I want to give everything to get it. And the way they have already reacted shows me that it could be me if I keep delivering the results. They're always there, giving their input, always interested in how you're getting on.

"Some other guys, it's just here's your stuff, get on with it and we'll see you at the weekends but we're in contact with them during the week, Pit Beirer himself rings up regularly to ask how it's going. That's not been the case before. Last year we just happened to be riding Kawasaki – we were not riding FOR them – and even at Honda Roger Harvey was helping us with what he could but there wasn't really anything there to move forward in the world.

"I've had injuries every year which has affected my ranking but in retrospect I think my riding progressed each year. In '06 I was riding good enough to get me into the top 20 but I was just struggling with the bike. It wasn't just me, the Honda that year just wasn't fast enough. I'd done the training and I felt good going into the year. The first few races in the mud didn't go too bad but when we started getting on the fast tracks that was when we noticed that the bike was just not up to scratch at that level.

"We had the bike sorted but there just wasn't enough power and when you're doing fast laps -

or off the start – you've got to be able to gas it along the straight bits. Getting out of the gate is 90 per cent of the race at a GP. You can be as fast as anybody through the turns, if the bike isn't fast enough you've got no chance. Machinery is not everything but it is the final ingredient when you have reached a certain level of fitness and achieved good speed.

"In '07 I started training and riding quite early, possibly I did peak too early. It was good to lead the British championship but I hadn't really been riding up the front before. I had gone from fifths and sixths to being on the podium and carrying the red plate in the Maxxis. I never put pressure on myself but I think it did come. I went to Lyng with the red plate and I normally like that track but I tensed up, didn't ride well and made a mess of it. And then the problems with the bike came with it.

"I think if all goes to plan this year there is no reason why I shouldn't finish top 10 in the [world] series. I have already proved that I can run with guys who are making the podium regularly. I might not be able to do it every week yet but I can build up to that. If I can get on the podium once, twice, that would be good.

"We can only try our hardest and see what comes of it because you have to have luck on your side too. But it's about time I had a season without injuries, it would be my first one in the GPs – the only season I didn't get hurt so far was '04 when I did the British and Under 21.

"I'm going faster than ever but I don't feel I'm pushing the limits. I've had to take my brain out and go for it in the past but sometimes this year I do a fast lap in qualifying and feel so smooth. You saw Everts, he was like that, so smooth but going so fast and that's how I feel now."









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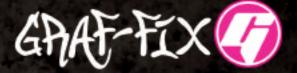




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Words and photos by ALEX HODGKINSON

emember when Britain used to win everything in sports? What, you're really THAT old! But seriously, when was the last time - since the rest of the world started taking 'our' sports seriously - that UK fans had the chance to see three British winners at world level on the same day?

Well, on Spring Bank Holiday at Mallory Park you could see just that! Billy MacKenzie in MX1, Tommy Searle or Stephen Sword or even Shaun Simpson in MX2 and what about Thorpey, Greg Hanson on his roaring CCM and Scott Eastwood in the Vets?

Wouldn't that be great and, of course, it's a dream - but it's a dream which could be reality as Gareth Hockey and his crew set out a gnarly 'British-style' track in the hollow behind the main spectator banking at 'the friendly circuit' in the East Midlands.

The MX1 form book has been thrown out the

window in the early rounds this year as injuries have hampered favourites like Josh Coppins and atrocious weather has turned the races into a lottery. But everyone should be back at peak form by Mallory and a classic is on the cards.

Billy Mac will be the first to admit he wasn't too excited by the prospect of yet another artificial track but, when he saw what RHL were doing, the Scot was as excited as ever for his home round in the series. Billy is a potential winner every weekend this year and we all know what he is capable of in front of the home fans.

The Scot is winning the Maxxis with one hand tied behind his back but that's not because of lack of opposition, it's because he's upped his game this year. And not just on his favourite tracks - everywhere. Sand was never Billy's strength but in the GP series opener at Valkenswaard he passed world champion Steve Ramon as though he was stood still and even

closed down leader Ken De Dycker. That was sheer class!

The first two GPs were a clean sweep for the Suzuki team with ex-British champ De Dycker taking a double win at Valkenswaard and Ramon his first GP win in five years at Bellpuig and the fuel-injected yellow bikes are sure to be at or near the front again in Leicestershire. But they know too that Yamaha, champions in the big bike class every year in this millennium until Coppins got hurt last summer, are a major threat with the Kiwi, Portuguese opening moto winner 'Il Mostro' David Philippaerts and a new bike which handles like a dream.

Here too there is internal rivalry for the role of team leader. In theory it is Coppins but the Italian will not roll over like Marc De Reuver last year and has already clashed with his team-mate in the opening moto of the year before Yamaha chiefs tried to paper over the cracks.

Mallory Park is situated in the village of Kirkby Mallory just off the A47 between Leicester and Hinckley. For advanced ticket deals call **0844 847 2447** or hook up t





With the Martin duo of De Reuver and Julien Bill off the pace and Mike Brown struggling to find his form at CAS, Billy Mac is Honda's main man while Kawasaki have shown speed but not until Portugal – results with Seb Pourcel and Tanel Leok as Kevin Strijbos seeks a way out of a personal crisis and Manuel Priem settles in his

A second for Max Nagl at Valkenswaard showed the potential of the stylish German at 20 the youngest rider in the class - under the direction of Stefan Everts and his KTM is a rocket, the fastest combination out of the gate. The opposition underestimate Mad Max at their peril.

Both Brad Anderson and James Noble have been set back by injury and illness in the early races but both are capable of a result, as is class newcomer Tom Church. That extra cheer will also bring that extra half-a-second so give these boys your support too.

MX1 completes both blocks of racing but MX2 is much, much more than just an appetizer for the struggle of man against machine and the elements, particularly with the host of UK talent on the line. Tommy Searle has not had the greatest of starts to the campaign and he

suffered the most horrifying start crash in Spain as he holeshot and then aquaplaned half the length of the straight. But by remounting after losing several minutes and surging back to eighth in that race he proved he's got the true grit we expect in our MX heroes. The speed, the desire and the potential are there and Tommy is already a British GP winner.

Stephen Sword is also a GP winner but never on home soil and it's something the Scot is desperately keen to put right. Working under the watchful eye of Dave Thorpe, Swordy maintains "I am back where I was before my injuries" and the methodical way in which he unlapped himself to get on the podium after early setbacks at Bellpuig plus his fourth overall in Portugal are proof enough that the dogged Scot is once again a force to be reckoned with.

Indeed, Scotland could post their very own Nations team with podium potential these days as Shaun Simpson runs riot on the home front and is mixing it with the factory boys at the GPs. The boy who was born with motocross in his blood has passed everyone at some time this year and has already left his visiting card to replace Tommy in the KTM factory squad next year. A podium at Mallory would increase his

chances still further.

But what about the foreign menace? Tyla Rattray rattled off three straight wins at the start of the campaign to confirm his return to the top flight but Tony Cairoli is maintaining his challenge and a double win in Portugal shows he's readapted to the 250F after riding a 450 through the early weeks of the year. With one race to run between DBR's June issue deadline and Mallory either of these men could be carrying the red plate of the series leader - it's that close!

Rui Goncalves has not been far behind his KTM cousins all year, the Yamaha support crew of Nico Aubin, Davide Guarneri and Manuel Monni have shown they cannot be discounted and Xavier Boog has been consistency personified on the new factory Suzuki. Sadly, injury will prevent Swift Suzuki's Pascal Leuret coming to the line at Mallory but it was the UK's other Frenchie - Gautier Paulin at Molson - who so nearly won a moto in his first full season of GP racing. The European champ was actually leading in Spain when the race got red-flagged but was pushed back to third on countback to the previous lap.

The rest of the native Brits still have to find their best form this year.



A punctured lung has hampered Jake Nicholls' progress but Swift team-mate Elliott Banks-Browne has already shown his potential in the Maxxis series as well as scoring in Spain and Portugal while Carl Nunn and Jason Dougan did likewise for MVRD in Spain and Nunny broke top 10 in Portugal after the honours had been left to Marcus Norlen in Holland. Martin Barr broke a collarbone in Spain but will hopefully be back for the British GP and Mallory is the big chance for the wild cards, lads like Mel Pocock, Kristian Whatley, Alex Snow and Lewis Gregory.

In the Vets there's only been one round so far and it was a muddy mess in Spain but in the one regular race Greg Hanson – the very same man who raced the last GP CCM back in 1989 - ran rings round everyone, even Thorpey, to give the Bolton factory victory on its return to the world stage after 19 years. Austin Clews couldn't hold back the tears of elation and he wasn't the only one. Greg got shunted off the track at the start of race two and had no chance to recover as the race was red-flagged in appalling conditions after just two laps but he will be ready to go for it again at Mallory.

As, of course, will Dave Thorpe. The

defending champion has got a Steve Paynetuned rocket from the Multitek workshops in his Phoenix Tools CRF450 and having savoured the adoration of the fans again at Donington last year will also be after the win. But so too will Scotty Eastwood. Always in the shadow of younger brother Mark, the 41-year-old rode with his head in Spain and travels to Mallory just one point off series leader Toine Van Dijk.

The near seven foot giant from Holland admitted at Bellpuig that his enduro experience paid off and he knows the danger comes not only from the Brits but also from Belgium's Peter Iven, still a regular winner in amateur internationals, '06 champ Thierry Godfroid, the aggressive Freddy Verherstraeten and '07 runner-up Jan Blancquaert.

And there will be plenty of tussles in the pack with original US Motocross des Nations hero Chuck Sun on the Monster Honda in the CAS awning leading other famous names from the past.

So order your tickets on the internet to take advantage of the great package deals on offer, pack the wellies just in case and get yourselves down to Mallory on May 31/June 1 for a British GP to remember. We'll see you there!



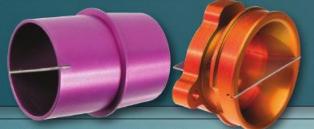
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rogress in sport is seldom linear and of those that make it few have done so without having endured more than their fair share of ups and downs.

Britain's Tom Sagar is one rider who's determined to make it. For years a top-level trials rider, today he's the UK's only official factory-backed rider in the World Enduro Championship. He's shown that he has what it takes to perform well at the highest level but so far things haven't quite gone to plan on the international scene in '08. Not that Tom's overly worried – he's been racing long enough to know that you have to take the rough with the smooth.

The transition from aspiring British hopeful to factory KTM rider came quickly. Very quickly in fact as just one season of WEC competition was enough to convince the powers that be within currently the WEC's most successful team that he was a rider with a bright future. A rider they needed to sign.

For Tom '07 was a year he'll never forget. Starting the season hoping for a top three in the British Enduro Championship but not really sure if he was ready for WEC competition, come the end of the year Sagar had punched well above his weight. Achieving much more than the result he'd aimed for in the BEC, Tom claimed his first national title and well and truly put himself on the enduro map.

"It was a strange situation at the start of last year's British championship," comments Tom. "Because Juha Salminen was competing I just wanted to finish as close behind him as possible. When Juha got

injured I just went for it. I was riding well and suddenly realised that I could win the championship.

"I started the championship as a kind of back-up rider to Juha, then I felt I needed to step up and make sure KTM, the team and I won the championship. I used my throw-away event as one of the BEC rounds clashed with the world championship event in Canada so I couldn't afford any mistakes. I rode well at the two Welsh events and then managed to wrap up the championship at the final round. It was a great feeling and a great end to an amazing season."

But equally as impressive as Tom's BEC performances were his international results in both the WEC and selected extreme events. With extreme races not getting any bigger than Erzberg, Tom's runner-up result ensured that his name would be remembered outside the UK as well as giving him a huge boost in confidence. And if ever there's a place to put in a good result it's right under the noses of KTM top brass at Erzberg.

While his Erzberg result was impressive it was Tom's WEC performances that ultimately led to his factory KTM deal, as well as ensuring he attracted attention from several other manufacturers. Starting the '07 WEC season steadily it was in Portugal that Tom first stood on a WEC podium – just three events into his world championship career. And with his ability to finish at the sharp end of the Enduro Junior class results growing, when the series headed to North America Tom claimed his first win.

"It was great to win in the States. It's not often the factory teams



NEXT GEN AIR ATION









support riders that aren't official team members but they wanted me to race there so I wanted to give them the best result I could. I enjoyed the races, the trip to the US - and things went well, really well.

Continuing his good form both at home and in the WEC after returning from the two North American events, Tom not only went on to win the British championship but also claimed a solid third place in the Enduro Junior championship.

But enough about last season, what about '08? "The first three world championship races haven't been great," comments Tom honestly. "Crashing on day one in Sweden was really disappointing. I knew it would be hard to get a great result but two top 10 finishes would have been good to start the year."

Unable to start day two after crashing heavily and burying himself into the frozen Swedish ground, the steady start Tom had hoped for didn't materialise. "I was a bit down after Sweden but it can happen. It didn't do my confidence any good but, well, it's behind me now. At least I wasn't seriously hurt.

'Portugal and Spain didn't really go much better. I had one good day in Portugal but it was really frustrating because both events had lots of motocross style tests and I wasn't able to use my trials riding experience on the extreme tests because they weren't that technical."

One of the things that has made '08 challenging for Tom is his switch of class away from 450cc machinery and onto a 250cc four-stroke in the

Enduro 1 class. Like many trials riders Tom's smooth style suits the mid-sized thumper and adjusting to the quarter-litre four-stroke hasn't

"To start with it felt good. I rode pretty well on a 250 four-stroke at the ISDE in Chile having had next to no time on the bike but I've found it hard this season. I've grown up not really revving bikes so to start riding a bike that needs to be ridden quite hard to get it to perform at its best is taking a while. I can't be as smooth as I'd like to be which is strange for me.

'I'm fine tuning things at the moment. I took a week off after the WEC race in Spain and since then I've been riding all the time and trying to work things out. I'm getting there. It's just hard when you're under the spotlight as a factory rider and the first three rounds of the WEC take place in just four weeks.'

As well as having to adjust to a smaller bike Tom is also adjusting to life as a full-time racer. Starting out like so many of the world's best by mixing work with racing during last season, this year Tom - as a factory-backed rider - is free to focus solely on his racing.

"It takes a bit of getting used to but I'm enjoying it. I'm just disappointed that I haven't been able to perform as well as I hoped I would. I have more time to train, ride, rest and prepare myself but I haven't been able to prove that it's helping my results, not abroad anyway. I'm confident that come the middle of the season I'll be able to show that the extra time I'm able to dedicate to my racing is helping me."





HIGHLANDFLING

SIX DAYS IN SCOTLAND

While enduro events dominate Tom's competitive season, there's one trials event he always looks forward to competing in - the Scottish Six Days Trial. Competing because he enjoys the event, because it's good training and because it gives him a chance to forget about everything for a few days, this year Tom will again be among the many riders heading north

"I've always enjoyed the Scottish. I really believe it's worth riding for a number of reasons. I really enjoy the event and six days on a bike is great training. I've ridden the event six times now and finished 12th in '05. I'm not competing in the hope of getting a great result, I'm just going to enjoy it.

"I'm also hoping that the next three world championship races will have real extreme tests. I've not been riding a trials bike that much recently so it'll be good to get back on one. Riding in Scotland will be a bit of a trials refresher course for me.'











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DÉJÀVU BRITAIN'S FIRST KTM FACTORY RACER

Back in '89 Paul Edmondson, at the time an up-and-coming young enduro star, signed to race for the factory-backed Farioli KTM team and went on to capture the 125cc Europeon enduro crown the very same year.

The more technical the going the better for the former trials ace

"Things have changed a lot since I raced for the team but it's still a great set-up," reckons Fast Eddy. The Farioli KTM team really helped to raise the level of professionalism in the WEC and they're still the team that most riders want to race for

'Their bikes are amazing. My 125 was so fast, I reckon it would still be pretty competitive today. The team was a lot more Italian then compared to what it is now but the professionalism and the results the team achieves is the same. I had some great years with the team and will always look back at my time there with some great memories.

'The WEC is a competitive place, always has been, always will be. Tom might be finding things tough at the moment but I'm sure he'll figure things out. He's shown that he can produce good results in the world championship and with a bit of time he'll soon be doing the



One thing Tom's sure about is that his results will improve. And they will. Thrown in at the deep end as a factory enduro rider after just one year on the international scene meant that the start of '08 was always going to be difficult. The fact that an almost unknown Finnish rider named Eero Remes has arrived in the E1 class and claimed two podium finishes and not yet finished lower than fourth so far this season has only compounded Tom's frustration at not being able to deliver what he knows he's capable of.

'I've not let the fact that Remes has been riding well, better than me, get to me. You can't. Yes he's a privateer and has had some great results but I've just got to raise my game and get the results I know I can.'

Thankfully it's not all doom and gloom - far from it. While things haven't started the way Tom hoped they would in the WEC the opening two rounds of the British championship have gone well. Winning round one and sharing day wins with Paul Edmondson at round two has shown that Tom's riding, at least at home, is everything it needs to be.

"I've been happier with my British championship bike than I have my world championship bike," explains Tom. "I'm not sure if I'm feeling the pressure a little bit at world championship races but I felt relaxed and confident at the two BEC races we've had this year. I'm not trying to ride stupidly fast but things are coming together. Both of the first two British championship races have been good events, I've enjoyed them and my results have been good. There are just two rounds of the BEC series left so I'm going to work hard to retain my title."

One event on the horizon that Tom is looking forward to is the GP of Wales in mid July. "I'm aiming for a podium finish. I'm pleased the event is when it is - in the middle of the season - because I'm confident that I'll be up to speed by then. It'll be one of the best events of the season and I know there'll be a lot of support for British riders. I want to do well in Poland, carry that into the GP of Wales and onto the event in France the weekend after. I'm really looking forward to it."

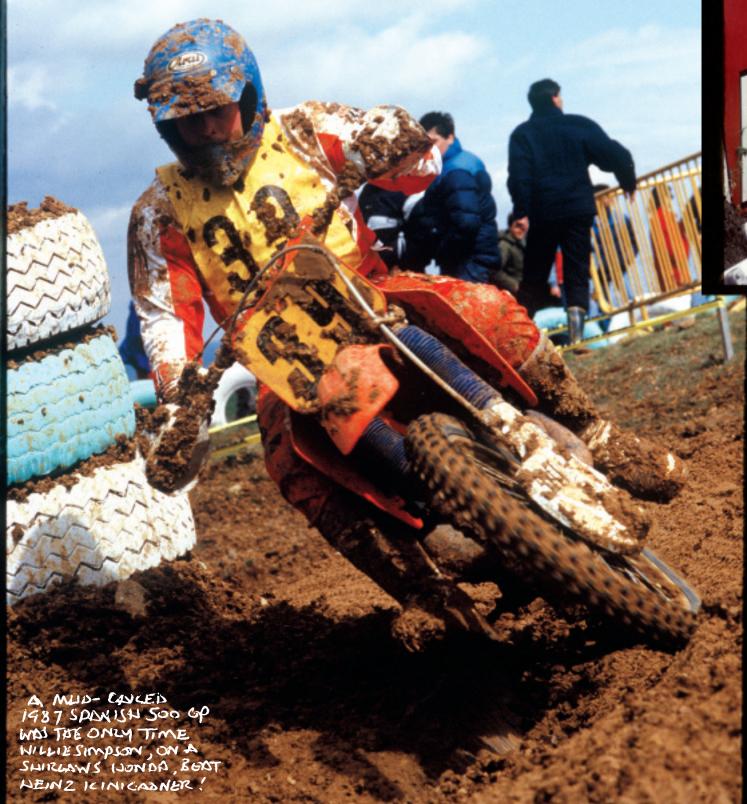
Optimistic, determined and confident that he can turn around his disappointing start to the '08 WEC series, Tom knows that it's more time on his bike, more time spent training and more time racing that will lead to the improved results he's capable of achieving.

'I'm not going to Erzberg this year. I'm going to Italy to compete in some enduro events instead. Erzberg is a fun event but I have more important things to do at the moment. Competing on a 250cc four-stroke is probably one of the hardest things I'll have to do. But I know I can improve my results and start performing like I did last year. I know I can."

BROTHERS IN ARMS!

ONE'S A BROAD-SHOULDERED BEANPOLE, THE OTHER'S SHORT AND STURDY – BUT, PHYSICAL APPEARANCES APART, HEINZ KINIGADNER AND WILLIE SIMPSON SHARE AN INDOMITABLE SPIRIT AND FIERCE DETERMINATION...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle



DESCRIPTION SIGNALEMENT

Occupation | GRAPHIC DESIGNER BILLINGHAM Place of birth Lieu de naissance



received a welcome recent email from Austria's only world motocross champion – the dashing, dynamic KTM legend Heinz Kinigadner.

In it 'Kini' enthused over the young British element in his factory team. "With our new English kids we are definitely happy. And with Shaun Simpson I have a rider who is wearing my KINI-Red Bull clothing line. I am really proud about this!

Fascinating to think that Kinigadner first came upon the Simpsons 26 summers ago. A year before Heinz joined KTM he campaigned a Yamaha in the 1982 world 250 championship. That same season Shaun Simpson's dad Willie was advised by experienced fellow Scot Vic Allan (see last month's Beat!) to try a season of 250 GPs as he was struggling to get on to the 500 GP grading list.

So as Heinz hit the track on a private Yamaha backed by Ezeb, his family bakery, Willie ventured forth with a Maico, wife Vanda and – a little more often than they'd have liked – me for occasional company.

Heinz had first ridden a couple of 250 GPs as half of a two-pronged all-Austrian factory team in 1980 alongside Willi Wallinger riding for Puch. The Austrian firm had previously hired guys like Harry Everts and Joel Robert and won the 250 title with Harry in 1975. Kini's best result was an eighth place at Retinne, in Belgium, while he and Wallinger both scored top 10 points in Germany.

A full 1981 campaign brought a career best third in Bulgaria for Willi while the tall, strong Kinigadner crashed onto the scene in spectacular style, third places in France and Austria contributing to his fifth overall in the championship. Leaving Wallinger at Puch, Heinz moved on to the Ezeb Yamaha for his only season on Japanese machinery with he and Willie Simpson competing against each other for the first time at Payerne's opening round in Switzerland.

With points awarded only down to 10th place Simpson struggled to score but Heinz mixed top fours with no scores until round four at Maggiora. There he raced to his first GP moto victory and a close second overall behind his pal Kees van der Ven. But Heinz crashed frequently and hard and got hurt at the next GP in France where, ironically, Willie had his best ride of the year, finishing eighth in race two just behind current

Shineray team boss Andre Massant!

While Willie headed off to 500GPs aboard a Pro Circuit Husqvarna in 1983, Kini made his significant move to KTM and in 1984 and '85 claimed his two world 250 titles, the second after reaching the final round trailing Frenchman Jacky Vimond by 12 points. That was a scorching sunny day at Goldbach in Germany where Kini's sheer bravado and 'joie de vivre' carried him to a crushing success which he and the gracious Vimond celebrated that night, wrapped in a huge flag on a swaying table and fuelled with drink and adrenaline!

Kinigadner's reputation as a party animal disguised an intimidating drive and willpower. It was no coincidence that his greatest performances often came in hideous conditions!

Having so dramatically become double world 250 champ, Heinz proved his pace on a 500cc Katoom in typically vivid style during that fabulous, inaugural three-class 1985 MX de Nations at Gaildorf. Fourth ahead of Jeff Ward in race one, Kini had burst past another US legend, David Bailey, into fourth place halfway through their second moto before being downed by a tailender. It mattered not. The imposing six foot four inch Austrian had proved his big bike worth and rejoined 'Oor Wullie', this time in the 500cc ranks, for 1986

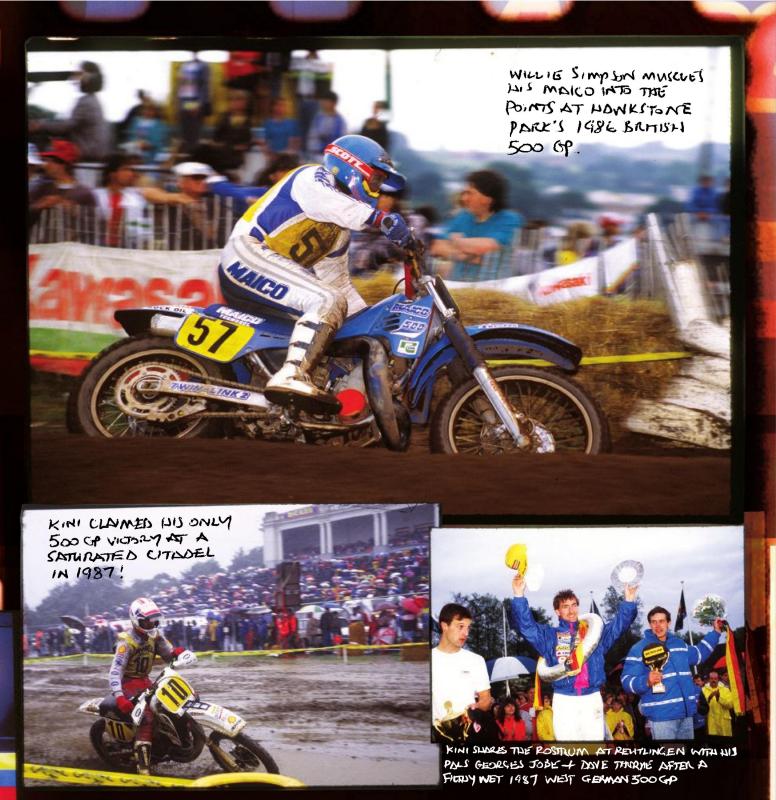
Simpson had ridden for Suzuki in 1984. Back at Husky in '85, he hoisted himself to 24th in the series with a terrific 10th overall in that famous final Swiss round at Wohlen where, in clinging mud, Dave Thorpe clinched his first world title! Now, for 1986 the man from St Andrews had returned to Maico.

Kini opened strongly at Sittendorf – his home GP – but faded in Markelo's Dutch sand where the gritty Simpson secured an eighth in race two! Then in the next round at Vimmerby in the forests of Sweden (sand again - Willie, like son Shaun, loved the stuff!), Kinigadner and Simpson finished seventh and eighth overall on another historic day when Kees van der Ven became the first rider to win GPs in all three world championship classes.

Three rounds later Kini suffered a massive top-gear endo as he led the opening lap of the Canadian GP at Chatsworth Moto Park. His season done he faded to 13th overall while Willie toughed it out with more points in Germany and at a typically demanding Hawkstone Park to end the season a career-best 23rd in the series.







The opening 500 GP of 1987 was at Yunquera, outside the Spanish capital of Madrid. It turned into a rich, red quagmire after relentless Sunday morning rain and proved the only time that Willie, now mounted on a Shirlaws Honda, got the better of Kinigadner in a race where they both scored points! The shrewd, rugged Scot battled to 10th place in the second moto, two places ahead of Kini in the sort of glutinous mud in which the Austrian usually excelled!

It wouldn't happen again, although Willie did finish 14th in the first race at Namur before a second moto deluge drowned the citadel as Kini splashed to victory and the only 500 GP success of his career. Also on the rostrum in Austria and on another saturated day at Reutlingen in Germany Heinz ended the year seventh in the world with Willie 29th, one point behind Greg Hanson's factory Kawasaki!

Kini pretty much retired from GPs after that, although a surprise appearance at Frome's 1988 British 250 round netted fourth place in a second race rainstorm! While Willie soldiered on in 500 GPs, Heinz moved on to adventure rallies like the Paris-Dakar and organised extreme enduros we showed on Eurosport where this indefatigable enthusiast could be seen cheerfully hauling complete numpties up vertical climbs like some crazed Weston beach race marshal!

Two contrasting riders – the one a tall, lean, broad-shouldered beanpole, the other short, square and sturdy – what Kinigadner and

Simpson did share was an indomitable spirit and determination to overcome adverse racing conditions and, most remarkably, enjoy it!

In fact, Heinz Kinigadner's resilience and buoyant optimism have been sorely tested over the past 30 years. Big brother Hans was paralysed in a racing accident and confined to a wheelchair. They then lost their mother in a car crash (their distraught father the driver), since when Kini has himself survived cancer only to have his own son paralysed in a motocross racing mishap. They say lightning never strikes twice but for the amazing Kinigadner family it's never stopped...

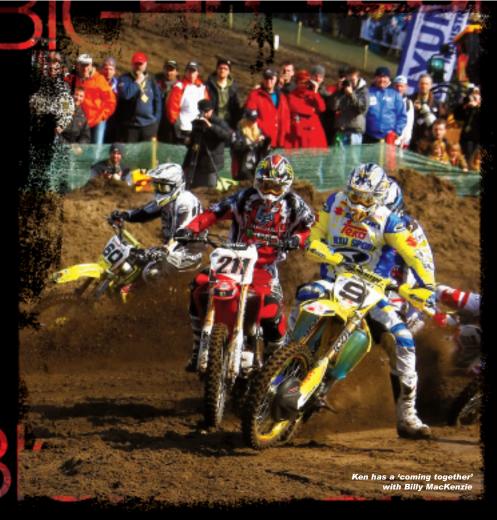
Kini appreciates the qualities he sees in himself now reflected in the second generation Simpson. The opening GP of '08 at a filthy wet Valkenswaard saw 20-year-old Shaun force to a career-best fifth in the first race then, caught up in an early melee, claw his way back to ninth in race two. I received another email from Kini a day later. "It was a great race yesterday from Shaun Simpson. Especially the first heat but also the second. He fought really good. Let's hope for a good future!"

Heinz had just returned from a month spent with his son seeking special therapy in Brazil. His emails always end with the same logo. 'Support Wings for Life.com: The Spinal Cord Research Foundation'.

For this extraordinary family the fight goes on. But the man himself has a heart huge enough to remain utterly immersed in a sport he loves and which made him a national hero.







en De Dycker has been German champion, British champion and until Portugal led the GP hunt in MX1. The factory Suzuki rider has truly arrived on the world stage at the age of 23 so we hooked up with the big Belgian to find out just how good it feels...

DBR: How did it feel to be riding with the red plate?

KDD: "It's nothing so different, it's just a different colour. I rode most of last year with it in Britain and it didn't make any difference. Okay, that was Britain, this is the world - but it is more something for the public, not for me. I don't even think about it."

R: The extent of your domination at Valkenswaard was incredible, every training and both motos from almost the start.

been really competitive in the races I had before that but I was not the only one who was riding strong. Going into the first GP nobody knows what to expect and I was no different in this. I just knew that I had to be there, doing my best and hoping it was good enough. I just looked to myself, my own bike and my preparation. And it worked!"

DBR: Was there anything special you had worked on?

KDD: "It was important for me to get better starts than in the past. That makes life so much easier. When I had good starts last year I got good results. My starts in Valkenswaard were not actually so good but at least they were not the worst and I could attack from there. I turned tight at the first turn each time and came out somewhere between seventh and 10th but it was at the second turn I could really make up places. Were you surprised?

I was on the outside and could carry my spec

KDD: "I didn't expect to be so strong either. I had through the turn while the riders on the inside I was on the outside and could carry my speed



were almost standing still because it was such a tight corner.

'And I could use the speed I was carrying out of the turn. I had a fence on the outside but inside of me there was probably two metres with nobody. That meant I was pretty close to the lead by turn three and I immediately pushed to make passes on the first lap. It was always going to be more difficult later in the race because there was soon only one line and on the first lap everyone is looking for lines, making mistakes.

"Having got so close to the front I knew that was what I had to do. Once I got in front I kept pushing because I wanted to make a gap and keep it that way if I could. Then nobody could pick up my lines. I don't think it matters who it is - if someone is riding on your rear wheel they can pick up on your lines and be a danger.'

R: I guess Billy kept you honest in race two? **KDD:** "Luc was signalling me that Billy was getting closer but I had a pretty good lead from those first few laps. I was still looking for new lines but there was no need to panic. It wasn't as though he was on my rear wheel but we started to come up on more and more lappers in the last 10 minutes and I actually had to up the tempo to maintain the same lap times.

DBR: Did you change anything in your preparation to be so strong?

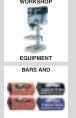
KDD: "Not really. I had to have an operation on the torn shoulder muscles from the British championship at the end of last year so I only started riding at the end of January but then I

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had two weeks of solid riding — getting used to the Suzuki and the team — before I hurt my ankle in the One on One at the first race in Mantova. At first I thought it was just a muscle but there was a little piece broken at the back of the foot so I had to rest for two weeks before Valence. That's what the doctor said and you have to listen. That's what they are paid for and you have to follow your body too. If you don't do that you will be in trouble.

"It's the same even when you don't have a crash — if I wake up in the morning and I don't feel good then I will alter my training plan, either do less or something else completely. That's one of the most important things I have learnt about training over the last few years, to listen to your body. But I think the big factor was that I am one year older with one year more experience."

DBR: Anything else which is helping you to be so strong?

KDD: "The race wins last year had given me the confidence that I could do it. Winning in Sweden was really a big thing for me. That was the key. Winning a moto is one thing but winning a GP something else.

"A lot of people said I couldn't do it and even

after I won there they were saying I just had a good day but I have proved now that it was not a one-off. Many people still think this but it is up to me to prove them wrong some more. That gives me a warm feeling inside every time I do it!

"And that is one of the good things about this sport of ours, the unexpected, that we can shock people."

DBR: You had a reputation for fading with arm pump. I guess that's what you are talking about? KDD: "I did have problems with arm pump 15-20 minutes into the race during the first half of last year but we solved it by mid-season when we found the right solution for the suspension. But I will admit that the first few times I took the lead in a GP, like at Valkenswaard and Mantova last year, I tensed up. It's something you have to get used to. But it helped me for this year. When I took the lead at Valkenswaard this year I had been there before, I knew what it was like and I could control it."

DBR: You had to pull out of a race in Germany one week later. Why was that?

KDD: "I had crashed on the Wednesday before Valkenswaard and there was a build-up of fluid

in my shoulder after the GP. By Thursday I couldn't lift my left arm so I had no choice but to stop riding for a week. The first time I went out riding again was on Thursday at Bellpuig when I went out on a bike to ride around in the countryside close to the track. I was scared to damage it further but I needed to know.

"And it wasn't easy at first. I soon got arm pump after not riding for a few days but I rode through it and was really enjoying myself by the end of the day. It's a lesson I have learnt in the past, that everything comes a lot easier if you ride every day and I try to ride a 40-minute moto in practice every week. But every race is better than training, I was sorry that I had to miss the German race."

DBR: How is it in the Suzuki team?

KDD: "I live at Neerpelt only 10 minutes from the Suzuki workshop and I go there almost every day. Even if I am not there for long, if it's only for a quick conversation – it doesn't even have to be about motocross – that helps all of us to be in contact with each other. It keeps us close, helps us to build team spirit.

"And working with my mechanic Luc Picart is a lot of fun. We have been really good









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friends, visiting each at home, for about four years now. We make a good team and I hope we can have plenty more to celebrate together."

DBR: Has the team been everything you expected it to be?

KDD: "I had already ridden in two very professional teams with Sarholz and CAS but Team Suzuki was still an eye-opener. They work day and night to ensure everything is perfect, I think for sure they are the most organised team in the paddock and there are so many solutions to chose from. Steve and me have many different settings - not just things like the seat or the triple clamps but also the engine. I am 1.90m tall, 95kg - much heavier than Steve and I need a lot more power.

Can you continue to be so dominant? KDD: "I know I will have more competition than at Valkenswaard, not only from Josh and Steve when they are fit. There are many good riders out there. I don't think any of the top riders nowadays are ever just a sand rider or just good on hardpack. If you're riding at the front in the world championship you need to be able to ride everything, the days are gone now when French or Italian guys couldn't race sand.

But I was not always a good sand rider either. When I was a kid and started to ride I had a hardpack track just behind my house and I couldn't ride sand. I was 13 or 14 before I started to ride sand good, now I think I am as good on all types of surface."

This is the first year you have been in a Belgian team and been able to race for the Belgian championship. Why is that?

KDD: "I think we have so many good riders in Belgium, it is natural that we have to ride for teams in other countries. The sport has grown so much nowadays that you just cannot do it on your own. We only have two Belgian teams and 20 GP riders so you have to look for teams outside Belgium where you can prove yourself if you want to earn a GP ride.

"But I don't think it does us any harm. You get to know more people, you get to know more types of track, different championships, you learn from every step. But I am really glad to be back in Belgium now, it makes everything so much easier - the travelling, the communication, that is always easier in your native language."

Ken claims the red series leader's plate doesn't bring with it any extra pressure Tell us about your bosses? deliver the power how you want it to be. We have

KDD: "Eric is the organiser. If you ask for something he will fix it immediately but he doesn't interfere so much with the riding or the set-up of the bike. It's a long time now since he raced and when he raced it was two-stroke, not four-stroke. Maybe he will talk later in the year about tactics from his experience all those years ago but it's too early to start that yet. He keeps one step back from that sort of thing at the moment but I am sure he will be there for both me and Steve if and when the championship is getting stressful later in the summer.

"Sylvain actually gets more involved. He spends a lot of time looking round the track and comes back much more with ideas about what I could try. A real different personality to Eric."

And Steve?

KDD: "Steve and I don't see each other so much during the week, just at the races. We talk then but we don't have a lot of contact otherwise.'

How is the feeling with the new fuel injection bike?

KDD: "It gives a good feeling, it really does

concentrated most of our energy so far on making sure the bike feels good for the race as a whole because you have to have a bike which you can ride strong for 40 minutes. Now we are in the position where we can look to see what we can do to help with the starts because they become more important on hardpack - you can't make up ground so easy in the early laps on those tracks - but I am confident I can do it better than most riders if I need to. I was always capable of putting in those really good laps passing five or 10 guys - but I would prefer to be up there from the start."

DBR: Where do you expect the biggest challenge to come from?

KDD: "I don't really think it is possible to narrow down the potential rivals to a couple of names. For sure Josh will get stronger, he already did good in the circumstances at Valkenswaard, Steve too will be stronger when he is not sick. But everybody in a factory team is in for it and everybody is fast enough. But Billy surprised me the most. We know he can be fast but he was never so fast before in sand."



IS YOUR HARSH-HANDLIN' STEED WEARING YOU OUT? CHANCES ARE YOU NEED A FEW MORE HOURS DOWN THE GYM - AND A SAG-SORTING SESSION THE WALKER WAY!

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by still-mx.co.uk

can become pretty complicated depending on how many Stellas have been consumed outside the various campers and caravans at race tracks around the world.

There are a lot of experts out there and that is cool but I have always found the simplest way to success is to keep things pretty, er, simple. At every track day I run I would have to say that almost every rider is running with incorrect sag on the rear of their bikes making them handle badly and causing the pilots to get tired more quickly.

The 'sag' is a measured zone in which the rear of the bike must operate. The shock spring

etting your bike up to perform at its best must be adjusted to obtain the correct 'static sag' and 'rider sag'. The static sag is the sag on the rear of the bike when it is standing under its own weight and the rider sag is the sag on the rear of the bike with the kitted rider sat on the bike in a normal riding position.

Basically, the 'sag' is the measurement from the shock at full extension to how much it sinks down when weighted. Simple! This measurement is really important as if the shock is sagging too much the bike will lack in rear wheel grip and ride like a chopper and, similarly, if the rear shock is not sagging enough then the bike will 'top out' when it is unweighted - such as over a jump - which will make jumping and hitting high-speed bumps dangerous.

The measurements given in this column are made assuming that the shock and its moving pivots are in reasonable order and have been serviced and work correctly. If your shock is in any way damaged or leaking get it to a suspension specialist straight away!

I have used the KTM 530 mag test bike for the shots. The measurements used for setting the KTM are the same as the other Euro and Japanese bikes. The only difference is the ease of adjustment with the Toomer.

The top locking ring is easy to get at and with a 4mm allen key the ring is loosened so you can tighten or loosen the spring as required. The Japanese bikes mostly run with two rings. One is for adjustment and the other is for locking in.

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- The tools required are measuring tape,
 4mm allen key, pit stand some duct tape,
 a pen and a friend or two!
- 2 Stick a small piece of duct tape lightly to the rear mudguard. This is used to write down each measurement so you don't make mistakes.
- The first action is to pop the bike onto the pit stand and measure from a point around the seat or tailpipe area of the bike to a selected point around the rear axle. It is important to measure from the same places each time to stay accurate. I prefer to measure from the end of the tail pipe as the tab on the measuring tape fits in easily at the same point each time. The lower point I use with the KTM is along the back corner of the swingarm. Write this measurement down.
- 4 Next stage is to take the bike off the stand and push lightly down on the rear of the bike and let it go. This will settle the rear end and then the 'static sag' can be measured. With your buddy lightly holding the bike you need to measure from the same two points as before. Make sure there is only the weight of the bike pushing the rear end down and your buddy hasn't fallen asleep on it! Write this measurement down.

(106 in lb) >>

3.0

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'rider sag'. No mathematics! Awesome!

BLITZKRIEG BRAAAP

UNTIL THEY RELEASE THEIR G450X LATER IN THE YEAR. BMW CAN'T BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AS A MANUFACTURER OF OFF-ROAD MACHINES - RIGHT? ER, DON'T BE FOOLED BY APPEARANCES...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Howard Boylan

here's no way that's going to work off-road!" I'm in a hotel car park in Brecon with my T+MX opposite number JD looking at a BMW R1200GS and for once the two of us are in total agreement. We're here as guests of Simon Pavey's Off-Road Skills outfit but judging by the sheer size of the Beemer the 'off-road' element of the following day's course is going to consist of little more that a spot of sedately-paced fireroad work interspersed with cups of Earl Grey and pheasant sandwiches with the crusts cut off. After all, this is a gentleman's machine - think wingback armchair with long-travel suspension - and no amount of spin is going to change that...

Despite a former DBR employee's angry assertions that I'm "never wrong" shortly before he stormed out the office, never to be seen again, I have - on occasion - got things a little arse about face (I once even got a tad excited about Cannondale's motorised efforts). But I go to bed that night confident that the next morning will bring with it nothing more taxing than a leisurely trail ride aboard the big boxer-engined twin.

Of course, the German giants are seriously weighing up the off-road competition market and their new single-cylinder 450 - already making waves in the WEC and soon to be unleashed upon the US GNCC series in the hands of Gordon Crockard - promises to be a full-on woods weapon when it's finally available to us mere mortals. But for now if you don't fancy BMW's big 1200 or the mid-sized 800cc parallel-twin then your off-road options are limited to the 'baby' 650X. And as I don't fancy the 1200 or 800 I start the day on the 650 which, with its lower seat height and single-cylinder motor, feels much more suited to the job.

Compared to, say, KTM's 450 EXC-R the 650X is still a big ol' unit. It's longer, wider, slightly higher and with a dry weight around the 140kg mark about 30kg heavier. But it's not really a fair comparison - this isn't a full-on competition-spec enduro machine and the Toomer is not its direct rival in the marketplace.

I'm keen to get a taste of Si's teaching technique so instead of leaving JD and me to blat around the huge trail network that criss-crosses the 4000-acre Walters Arena Enduro Park, the Dakar Rally ace takes the pair of us off into a gnarly trail section for a lesson in rut riding. What quickly becomes apparent is that for all its bulk, the 650X is right at home in some pretty hardcore conditions and once Si points me in the right direction - second gear and making full use of the torquey motor - it's actually pleasurable to ride. And, amazingly, the same ruts are possible on the 1200 although it has to be said the experience is a little more stressful on a 200kg-plus machine.

It's about this time that the penny drops - that big lump of German metal we'd been sneering at in the hotel car park the night before really does work off-road!







READY TO RIP!

TWEAKED N' TICKLED...

As much fun as winding up the R1200GS is on the fireroads, my weapon of choice for the day has to be Si's tweaked and tickled 650X. With an Ohlins rear shock and Akrapovic exhaust, this

After a quick spin on the 800 (not as fun as the 1200 or as useful as the 650 – and ABS simply sucks off-road) Si's steed feels like a 250F in comparison and is an absolute blast to ride. At times it's easy to forget you're on a bike that weighs a fair few pie suppers more than a race-sorted 450F enduro machine as it eats up some serious enduro terrain and even a few low-speed trials-type sections.

On the fireroads the exhaust note is an awesome-sounding raw bark and the ride is smooth and controlled with the forks and shocker working in harmony together and the steering precise. But the best bit has to be through fast turns - momentarily back off the throttle, get your weight over the bars, crack it WFO and feel the back slide out before it digs through the loose stuff, hooks up and fires you forward. Mega!

> Jumping a 200kg-plus bike is a little unnerving but the R1200GS feels super-stable with both wheels off the ground



"Fancy doing some jumps?" asks Si with a grin after half-a-dozen more runs through the rutted trail section. Now he really is taking the Mickey Bliss! The only way of getting both wheels of the 1200 off the ground - at once has got to involve either a controlled explosion or some sort of crane but on loose gravel the bike feels so stable that speed's deceptive and what's meant to be a little blip off the top of a bank results in proper, genuine flight. And it doesn't even feel like a hippo tumbling off a trampoline when I land the super-plush suspension simply soaks up the considerable combined weight of bike and rider. In fact, it's so much fun I have another go. And another.

At the end of the day I get the chance to take the 1200 on an extended trail ride behind similarly-mounted instructor Steve Haghe, another Dakar competitor who I first encountered back in 2002 at the Transatlantic Challenge enduro in Iceland. For such a big bike the way it deals with muddy trails and snaking, rocky climbs between trees is nothing short of astounding - I certainly wouldn't attempt half the things it gobbles up with ease if I wasn't following Steve. But it's on the fireroads that the 1200 feels most at home. Up on the pegs, weight forward and with the power whacked on, 80mph has never felt so safe with the confidence-inspiring steering super-precise. For five minutes I too am a Dakar legend - albeit one competing on the not-yet-happened Prologue in the Brecon Beacons!

Of course, what goes up must come down and with my off-road ego soaring there is only one way to go.

Wrestling Judge Dredd's lawmaster motorsickle up a long, steep, rocky climb is a hill too far for me and just before the summit I get an inkling of how the captain of the Titanic must have felt. But with a 200kg-plus BMW developing 100-plus ponies getting seriously squirrelly underneath me there's no way I'm going down with this ship so I head for the lifeboat and manage to jump clear. Without something soft and tender (me) to break the Beemer's fall it comes down with a crunch on a rock, shaking the needles from the pines and breaking the rocker cover.

"You were right," grins JD - sensibly mounted on a 650X after watching me heave it upright, "there's no way that thing was going to work off-road!"

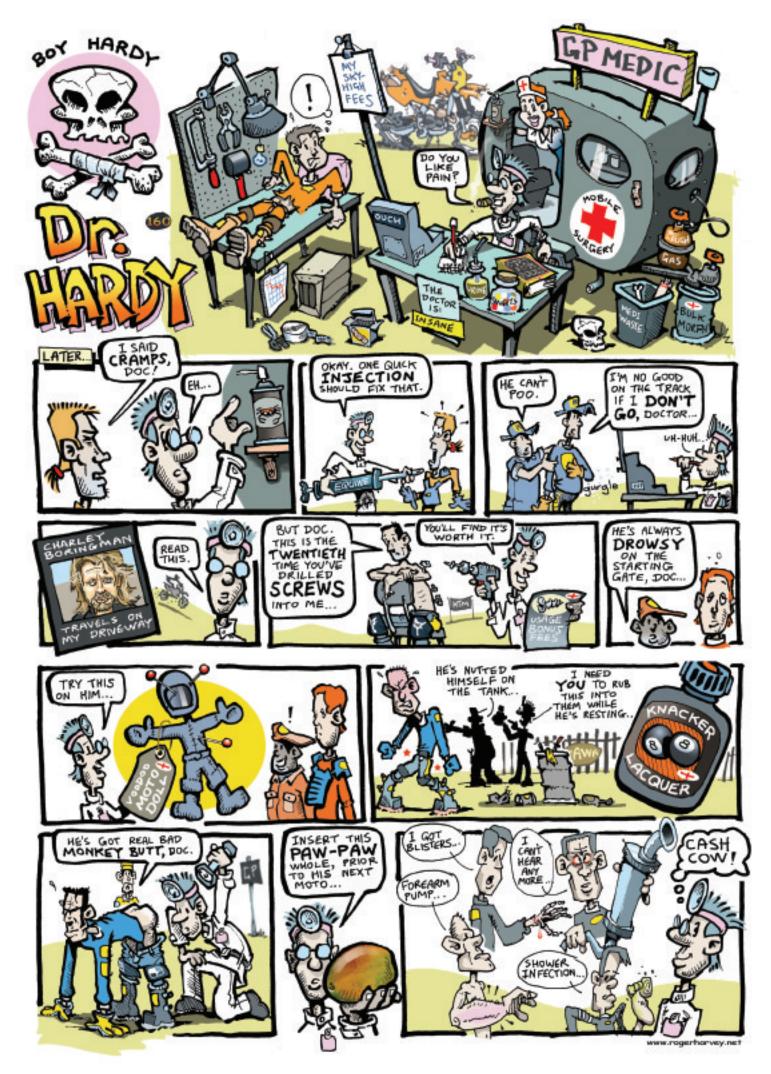






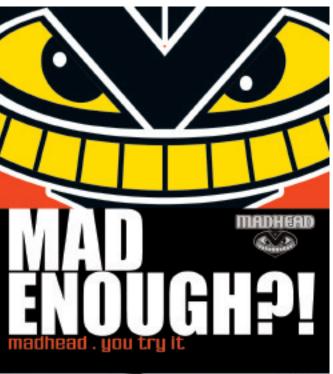














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ith the British motocross grand prix at Mallory Park just around the corner you can more or less guarantee that almost every Brit-born contender is struggling to sleep at night as they fantasise about what it would be like to lead the pack in front of their home crowd. Of course, a few are already lucky enough to know that feeling - and one of them is Welshman Mark Jones.

A former British youth champion, Jones originally entered the motocross world championship as a privateer on a Sammy Doble-backed MD Racing Honda. But when Stefan Everts wrecked his knee in a pre-season accident at Beaucaire in 1999 and Radson Honda team manager Dave Grant got on the blower to the boyo from Blaengarw to offer him a factory ride, Mark signed on the dotted line.

Jones was able to use his new tool to launch himself to the front of the pack on many occasions, one of which came at that year's British Grand Prix at Foxhill Moto Park. On a damp and drizzly day with the hillsides heaving and even more motocross fans tuned in live on Eurosport, Mark Jones lived the dream and led his home GP. But like the motocross career ahead of him, that dream would soon turn out to be a bit of a nightmare.

'I came off the start pretty good and I'd noticed that they'd built a bank on the outside of the first corner that was about two or three foot high and I thought if I overshot I could bounce off that and get back down inside everyone," says Mark with the memory still vivid in his mind. "So that's what I did, I came out of the corner in second behind Remy Van Rees and I passed him in the corner at the bottom of the valley after the tabletops to take the lead. It was really cool and I could hear the crowd when I passed him, which was a really good feeling. I was getting excited to come back down the valley and I sort of hit a rock going up a hill, it cartwheeled me and that was it...

"As soon as I clipped it I could feel the bike bottom out and I was sat down trying to get drive as well so it just compressed me and threw me right over the bars. I could hear the crowd going 'oooooooh' and the next thing I knew I was down in the dirt and picking the bike up and watching everyone go by. Looking back I'd have probably done things a little differently - I'd have stood up I think - because I often wonder what it would be like to come back down the valley in the lead...

Despite losing big points with that crash Jones ended his first full year in the 250cc world championship in 12th, scoring a podium finish at the Czech GP along the way. Not bad for a rookie season especially when you consider Josh Coppins' first full year as a GP racer resulted in 23rd position - but since then and using Mark's own words "it's just been injury after injury".

"I signed with Pamo Honda at the end of '99 but I broke my wrist at the first GP of 2000 in Valkenswaard. I came back later in that year and had an eighth overall at one round before breaking my wrist again. At first I carried on because Dobby thought it was just tendonitis and someone else thought it was just bruising and I don't think it was until the beginning of 2001 that I had another x-ray and they found it was fractured.

"After that the deal I had with Martin Honda fell through and Ash Kane helped get me a ride with RWJ Honda and also sorted out a visit to see a top doctor in Germany called Dr Weber – he used to work with Grant Langston and road race guys like Ralf Waldmann – to look at my wrist. I was fortunate that 2001 was the year that foot and mouth held off the British championship because I didn't start racing again until the middle of the year. Then in my second year with the RWJ team I broke my foot testing so that was another year wasted.

The 2003 season was actually an injury-free year with Steve Dixon's Yamaha team but all my confidence had gone by then. At the time I thought I could get back to form on the 250cc two-stroke but despite Steve's best efforts to set up the 250 we ended up racing the 450 four-stroke at the end of the year which I felt much better on and my results started to get better and better."

The 2004 season was a turning point for Mark as he stepped away from chasing the GP dream and concentrated on domestic success with Mark Bishop's Phoneparts KTM team. After jumping seven spots to finish fifth in the British championship and battling for the win in the British four-stroke championship until almost wrecking himself in a crash at Wakes Colne, it was obvious to see that Mark's confidence, speed and passion for racing were returning. It was a mood mirrored in 2005 as Mark raced under the awning of EA/Dirt Bike Store KTM, another Bishop-managed team.

As Mark's mojo started to return one thing was becoming very apparent – he needed to be back among the sport's elite at GP level. While the EA squad and then the PAR Honda team Jones would ride for in 2006 could offer wildcard rides at the odd GP or two it just wasn't enough to satisfy Mark's desire.

Enter Irish entrepreneur Roger Magee who'd just split with former British champion Gordon Crockard and was looking for a new MX1 rider for the 2007 British and world championships. "I talked to Roger and sorted a deal with him and I was really happy to be doing a full season of GPs again with the Wulfsport team. Roger's a good guy and I get on with the Simpsons real well too so I thought I could do well. >>



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hen Aldon Baker showed up on the scene at the end of 2000 with Ricky Carmichael, people didn't notice this diminutive South African hanging around Carmichael's camp. What they did notice was that Ricky went from size 36 pants to size 30. He was in noticeably better shape and the winning started right away – in supercross, at least. Ricky was already a winner outdoors but it wasn't until Baker showed up that Ricky started putting up undefeated seasons. Together, Baker and Carmichael redefined what it took to be successful in motocross and supercross racing. Now Baker is hoping to continue that trend with James Stewart.

DBR. You're now a world-famous trainer but how did you get to this point?

AB: "I'll try and give you the short version but basically I grew up in South Africa and I was a personal trainer. Gosh, I've been doing it all my [adult] life, going to London and working in gyms there in order to get qualified and then went around Europe and sort of did the wild thing there. When I returned from that I got involved in mountain biking and it went quicker than I thought. I thought I'd be in South Africa for a while but things turned around quicker than I predicted with my initial deal into mountain biking. I quickly went to Europe and then to America to expand my horizon in that field and to try to do it full-time. I ended up racing mountain bikes and road bikes professionally for about five years.

"But my main focus was mountain biking and that's actually what brought me to the States – to race mountain bikes and also to try and get into the Olympics. I qualified for the Olympics but my country pulled out at the last minute so that kind of ruined that dream. Shortly after I finished up with the cycling deal and the mountain biking. I made friends with Johnny O'Mara and he knew my background and introduced me to Ricky. He knew I was a personal trainer and the timing was right at that stage. Ricky needed someone full-time so we worked something out and in 2000 I moved over to Florida to start with Ricky

and in 2000 I moved over to Florida to start with Ricky.

"And it wasn't just my personal training background that helped, I learned a lot about preparing for races and things like that when I was cycling. Your body has to be in good condition and you've got to know how to fine tune that and get along with the stresses of travel and all of that. It all seemed to gel pretty well with the motorsport industry which at that point hadn't really been into this kind of training. No-one had really good structure and planning. My plan with Ricky gelled really well and it was an amazing eight years."

DBR: You've been half credited for causing the entire industry to turn upside-down. When you joined Ricky all of a sudden everyone else had to start taking training a lot more seriously to be competitive.

AB: "Yeah, I think so. There are a lot of pieces to the puzzle and each guy's different but I think the sport has elevated and I think Ricky was key in that elevation. You had a guy that could ride and he was real quick but the biggest thing about Ricky was

that he knew his shortfall was his fitness. He knew it needed to be fixed and he took a big step when he fixed it. We worked well together and then, yes, it was a turning point where all the other riders thought 'man, we need that, too'. I think it was a good direction for the sport because it was a professional deal and the teams put in a lot of money and effort and the rider has accountability to that. He needs to be taking care of himself and showing how serious he is towards gaining the goals, too."

DBR: I've heard it said in the pits that now that James is out and now that Ricky's retired, the two guys that are battling it out at the top of supercross aren't in the kind of shape they could be in but that's okay because they're just so much better than everyone else right now...

AB: "It's just human nature. You're only going to do as much as what you need to do to get the job done. It's just a human fault. Not many will take the initiative to try and raise that bar. But the guys that do that are the very dominant guys like Ricky was. But it's a tough sport anyway and training's not easy. Not everyone can do it at that level and when you lose two top guys out of the season, most guys in their situation are going to decide they can relax a little bit and that's just the way it is. It's always been like this, though.

"When Johnny O'Mara and Ricky Johnson and Jeff Ward and those guys fazed out, there was a little bit of a lapse back then where the guys weren't taking training as seriously. I mean, McGrath was unbelievably talented and really didn't need to do much."

DBR: There were stories of McGrath in 1993 and 1994 sitting and signing autographs with his team-mates – Jeff Stanton, Doug Henry and Steve Lamson – while eating a bag of Chips Ahoy cookies on race night.

AB: "And guys that have that immense talent, it's hard to beat sometimes. Stanton was a hard worker and it paid off for him but McGrath had that really natural talent. Ricky wasn't a natural supercross rider. We always knew that. But look how well he did because he applied himself.

"But if he didn't have any competition he may not have had to apply himself so hard and you've kind of got to gauge your level on where your competition is and who raises that level."

DBR: It's not like Carmichael needed to be in better shape to win. He won a lot before he was in shape. He was a chubby dude. But when he got into shape he started winning everything. He had the two 24-0 national seasons and never lost a supercross title after that. That's really the difference, right?

AB: "Yeah and that's the thing. With better preparation your consistency is so much better and that level is just so much higher. I don't want to rip anyone off who's racing right now but to me I would've thought Chad should've won every race this year, you know?"





For years you were trying to beat James so that must be a little weird AB: "He called me. I would've never, ever thought that I would've worked with James. It would've never been in my plan. Everyone knew Ricky was retiring so my thought was that I had to take on someone else but I was working with Ben [Townley] and ideally I was looking at Ben just becoming my premier guy and that would be it. It ended up that it couldn't work out with Ben. We tried to get things sorted out but we couldn't get that squared up and that's pretty much the way it was going to be and then I got a call from James. It was very unique because I was wondering who I was going to call or what I was going to do. I had options to work a lot more with Nicky [Hayden] and just go more into road racing and I thought that's what I was going to do but then James approached me.

At first I was saying 'I don't know about this, I don't know if he's ready or if he's got what it takes to listen and to do all the things it takes that my plan would require'. Anyway, we met up twice and I saw where he was at and he had had time off to think and to decide what he wanted to do and what was going on and where he had made mistakes and he gave Ricky a lot of credit. He knew that Ricky needed my help and he felt that he needed the same help. He knew mine and Ricky's deal had come to an end and that was the lead-in. The rest is history. It was very unique and cool how things turned

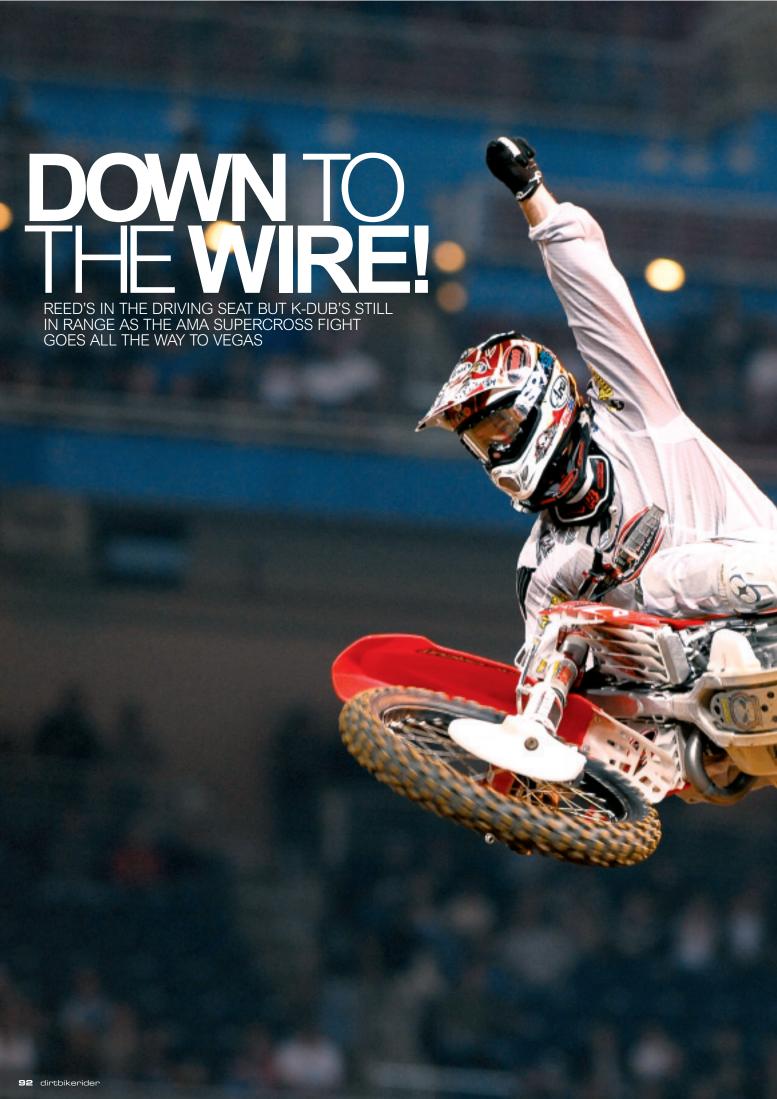
You were with Carmichael when he went through his knee injury in 2004. How much of that experience has helped James with his knee injury now? AB: "A lot. Gosh, knees are becoming a thing for me. Ben also had a full knee reconstruction. James' isn't that bad but I definitely feel like I've got a lot of experience on the knees. When I first started with James I said 'what about your injuries? How is your knee from that previous deal?' and he said 'well, I

riding without an ACL?'. Obviously, it hasn't been ideal but he said that he knew it would take four months to repair at least and when it happened before, they were kind of in two minds about letting it heal up on its own since the ACL was already gone or getting it fixed. So we started getting training last year and everything was looking fine for supercross but then we had that little accident right before Christmas and that was it. It all changed. Then it was like 'now, it has to be done properly

James is on schedule for the Nationals now, right?

AB:: "Yeah, right now. He had some testing done last week and everything looks really good with the graft and there are no problems. We look like we're good to go. But ideally you'd want more time. The best is a full six months like Ricky had. That's ideal. As much as you can see on an MRI, you can't really see how the blood is going through there and how things are really looking. But he's pretty much on schedule to start the outdoors and he'll probably start next week [May 1] riding a motorcycle. It would be nice to have another month, though. He's getting stronger and stronger every week but you want more just to have some extra protection. But the schedule doesn't allow that."

DBR: He is the kind of guy that, potentially at least, could miss the opening round and possibly still win the title. Had you guys considered that? AB: Yes, we did. Originally we thought he may even miss two rounds. But that depended on how the repair went and the strength tests that we do. He's actually well ahead so that's really positive. But that's still a possibility [missing the first race or two] because we still have to see when he gets on the motorcycle how he's feeling. If there are any aches or pains we'll have to shut it down. We've come this far so we don't want to create bigger problems. We just don't want to jeopardize the long-term plan."





bout halfway through the Monster Energy/
AMA SX Championship it was pretty well
understood that if anyone was going to have
a shot at the title it would only be because San
Manuel Yamaha's Chad Reed let them have a shot
at it. Now, as the series winds down, he's done
exactly that...

In Dallas, where Reed has always been pretty dominant, Monster Energy Kawasaki's Travis Preston grabs the holeshot, only to be immediately overtaken by Reed who speeds off with what seems to be an easy victory over Yamaha's Josh Hill, Honda Red Bull Racing's Davi Millsaps and Reed's championship rival, Torco Racing Fuels Honda's Kevin Windham.

"I've had a lot of good memories here," Reed says. "My favourite one is probably in '03 – I was on top of my game and I'd won around four or five straight and we came out and beat up on RC. That was the good old days. My motorcycle that year was

unbelievable and he was struggling. I feel like I've given a lot of wins away this year – four to be exact – and we're just trying to go out there and win this title. Tonight was awesome. I'm so happy for Josh Hill to get up here and put Yamaha 1-2."

Reed holds a lead of 27 points after Dallas. "Yeah, it should be a hell of a lot more but I made a lot of mistakes," Reed says. "I really want to win this title and before this season started we did our work and put our heads down and we never shied away from the goal. We lost a competitor [James Stewart] but we're still out there fighting for this thing and that's all that counts."

Speaking of making mistakes, when the series heads to the next round in Detroit, Reed goes down in a heap in the track's rhythm section during the first practice of the day and is carted off coughing up blood. Taken by ambulance to the hospital, he's diagnosed with a broken right scapula and badly bruised lungs.

"When I hit the ground I just thought it was over," Reed admits. "It wasn't necessarily the pain – the pain hadn't really set in at that point – but when I hit the ground and was trying to get my breath I was just gurgling blood and it just kept coming out of my mouth. I was freaking out, you know? Throughout my career it's not abnormal for me to hit my chest or something and then cough up some blood but this wasn't coughing up blood, it was actually running out. I couldn't stop it and it kind of freaked me out."

Amazingly, he's cleared to race but he can't even make it three laps in his heat before being forced to pull out in pain. He does the same in the LCQ and is forced to use a provisional to get into the Main. To compound the issue he crashes in the first turn of the Main Event. Fortunately for Reed, Windham isn't near the front as he starts at the tail end of the top 10 and begins to work his way forward.

K-Dub eventually finds his way up to third, missing out on a huge opportunity to make up





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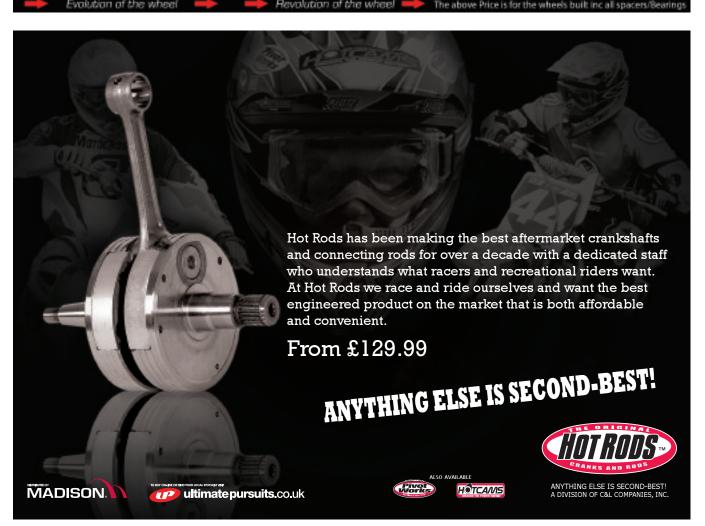
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points on Reed who miraculously finishes 12th to lose only 11 points to Windham.

"I rode behind me a little bit in the beginning and then I was able to open up a gap on [Josh] Hill, Windham says. "Those whoops were brutal and the track was tough and I made a couple mistakes. It's just been an up-and-down battle all day trying to keep myself calm.

Reed is much more optimistic, though, considering how bad things could've been and how things turned out. "It was a really difficult and tough weekend but to leave still 16 points in the lead is pretty amazing. I was just looking forward to leaving with maybe a three-point lead.

By St Louis the following week it seems that Windham's advantage is already dwindling. Despite his week-old injury, Reed grabs the holeshot and leads the first three laps before Windham can find his way by to take the win. Reed still holds onto second, meaning that Windham only makes up three points in the race.

"I was a long way from 100 per cent," Reed says. "Going from 12th [last week] to second [this week] is huge for me. We had an awesome week. I was back and forth from LA to Temecula, just trying to see doctors and trying to just get everything taken care of. Last weekend was just survival, this weekend I

felt pretty good in practice and I was on the top until like two laps from the end and that was kind of surprising.

"The track just got really gnarly in the Main Event and the whoops were really tough and I couldn't hang with K-Dub in the whoops so it just wasn't worth it for me. I had to let go of my pride and look at the bigger picture and that's tough. I felt for the rest of the track I had what it took to win, I just didn't have what it took in the whoops.

At the penultimate round of the series in Seattle, Reed suffers another setback as Windham takes the lead right off the start and Reed falls in the first turn. However, about three laps in while by himself out front, Windham gets a haybale cover sucked into his rear wheel and he's forced to stop and remove it before continuing. He loses five spots and sits sixth. At this point Reed has already caught up to 12th and can see Windham.

The chase is on as Windham dices his way by his team-mate Josh Grant (in his 450cc debut) for fourth, then by Monster Energy Kawasaki's Timmy Ferry for third. By now Reed is working on Grant for fifth. Then Windham catches and passes Millsaps for second and then Short for the lead with only two laps to go. At this point Reed is passing Ferry for fourth, then he blows by Millsaps for third with only

one lap left to run. On the last lap, Reed block-passes Short for second, only for Short to come right back at him and nearly knock him off the track. Reed finally seals the deal and passes Short for second in the last turn of the race, once again minimizing Windham's points gain on the weekend despite a heroic effort from the Honda rider.

Reed isn't happy with the 'team tactics' he saw in Short's move on the last lap. "I've been around racing all my life - since I was three years old - and I would expect my team to do the same thing if we had the numbers," Reed says. "I'm outnumbered and I understand that and I applaud them [Honda] for that. When you want to win a title you've got to do what it takes but there's team tactics and then there's dirty riding and I just can't wait until next week. It's going to be fun in Vegas. I can't wait.'

Windham is happy with his win but unhappy about the 10-point gap going into the season finale. "I want the championship and tonight was probably one of the best opportunities to get it. It was a great night of racing and I think this is a race that's going to be talked about for some time - both with Chad coming through the pack and that bale. I mean, when was the last time you saw somebody come back to win after getting off and digging a bale out of his rear wheel? It was a crazy race."







FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

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- Chad Reed 340 points Kevin Windham 330
- Davi Millsaps 262 Andrew Short 261

Josh Hill 210 Timmy Ferry Nate Ramsey 206 173 David Vuillemin 158 Nick Wey 144 10 Paul Carpenter 136







TWINPEAKS!

By the time the Lites East series hits Dallas the pressure's firmly on Torco Racing Fuels Honda's Trey Canard who makes life even harder for himself when he goes down on the opening lap and is forced to fight his way through the pack while his team-mate Josh Grant grabs the lead off the start.

However, Grant's lead only lasts a couple of laps before he stalls his bike coming out of a turn, handing the lead to previous-round winner Ryan Villopoto of the Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki squad. Villopoto leads the remaining 13 laps and Canard catches back up to fourth, duplicating the previous round's top four.

"The beginning of the season wasn't good at all," Villopoto says. "I just worked on it and worked on it and finally I'm close to where I was last year.'

Still, Villopoto sits 17 points behind Canard with only two rounds left to run. Then comes Detroit and Villopoto grabs the holeshot while Canard sits second. Canard runs second for about half the race before the pressure gets to him and he goes down. To make matters worse, he can't re-start the bike and he's lapped by Villopoto as he's sitting there. Heroically, he manages to catch back up to 10th place but the damage is done.

With the win by Villopoto, he now only trails Canard by three points going into the Lites East finale in St Louis. Since both Canard and Villopoto hold three wins and since the first tie-breaker goes to the person with the most wins, the basic story for the finale is that whoever wins gets the title.

Villopoto's team-mate Branden Jesseman actually grabs the early lead in St Louis with Canard second, Grant third and Villopoto fourth. Villopoto finds his way around Grant and Canard gets around Jesseman but just as Canard grabs the lead, Villopoto steals it. For the next two laps Villopoto looks to be pulling away and then Canard makes a push, catches Villopoto and then on lap seven, right before the finish, Canard dives to the inside of Villopoto and the two hit with Villopoto flying off the track and into the finish-line pole.

Just like that, the championship is decided. Canard takes the win and the title while Villopoto recovers for fourth behind Jesseman and Grant.

"I just go do my best and the outcome happens how it happens," Canard says. "I felt kind of bad that Ryan went down but I would expect him to do the same thing to me and that's racing. I didn't mean to take him out but it was a good race. I think he could've stopped and saved it but that's how it happened and that's over now so we'll just concentrate on the future.

The following week the Lites West return to action with Boost Mobile/Yamaha of Troy's Jason Lawrence sporting a six-point lead on Rockstar/Makita Suzuki phenom Ryan Dungey. For Dungey to win the title he must win the race and hope that Lawrence finishes

Dungey does his part. He grabs the lead off the start and leads every lap of the Main Event. However, Lawrence does his part. After starting fourth, he passes his way quickly into second and that's where he stays to the finish, winning his first professional championship. Yamaha's Broc Hepler finishes third.

"I slowed it up a lot [late in the race]," Lawrence says. "I was super-lucky to have Hepler there right behind me because Yamaha wants a championship and Hepler was willing to help me out. That just made me so much more comfortable with him right behind me as a blocker or whatever it was. But as it turned out, no-one caught him and he didn't have to do much. That helped to keep me calm during the race and I didn't have any intentions of making a run at Dungey because if I was in his position, I would try and do something to put me back behind third, for sure."

FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

Trey Canard Ryan Villopoto 147 points 137 Nico Izzi 99 94 Branden Jesseman Josh Grant 91 86 84 84 Tyler Bowers Ryan Morais Ryan Sipes 9 10 73 71 Martin Davalos

Billy Payne

Jason Lawrence 157 points Ryan Dungey 154 131 Austin Stroupe 126 117 100 **Brett Metcalfe** Tommy Hahn Justin Brayton 95 79 73 72 Dan Reardon Broc Heplar Will Hahn 10 Robert Kiniry





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SOB**STORY**

LONG HOURS, MISSED MEALS, ENDLESS TRAVELLING AND PRIMA DONNA RIDERS – LIFE AS A FACTORY MECHANIC SURE SUCKS...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by STEVE COX

ith the Monster Energy AMA SX series winding down, the riders and teams are pretty much thinking about redemption and whether or not it will come in the form of the outdoor motocross series.

For the riders – unless you're Chad Reed or Kevin Windham – the supercross series just really didn't go your way and you need the outdoor season to go well for you so that nobody repos your Lambo and you can keep on living the good life.

As a mechanic for 12 years (five of those being for factory KTM and Yamaha) I hated this time of the season. You're still travelling to the races and doing regular maintenance on your SX bike but now you have the task of

building an outdoor machine and going testing during the week. Let me take you guys through what your average factory wrench goes through in a week of SX/MX...

Thursday: Fly across the country (because at this point, the southern California races are done) and put your watch three hours early. The time thing is important here in a little bit. Elbow a little lady out of the way to get your bag that's filled with parts that you are bringing to the race for stock in the semi – it only weighs 70lbs, no big deal. Take monorail from airport to rental car place, wait in line for your car, then walk to your car which is always as far away from the counter as humanly possible. Your arms are killing you from the bag of shocks and forks that you're no doubt carrying. Get to your hotel and have a bit of supper there. After supper go outside and unload semi and strip your bike down to the frame and soak all your bolts and decide what you need to do tomorrow. Remember what I said about your watch? Well the time change makes it hard to fall to sleep and you eventually drift off around 3am...

Friday: ...only to awaken just a few hours later to go and start building your motorcycle! With your body all whacked out with the time change, you stumble out to the truck and start assembling what you hope will be the winning bike the next night (very unlikely unless your rider's first name is Chad and last name is Reed). As you build your bike this might be the most at peace that you're at all week (not at the shop where people are bugging you and yelling at you for some dumb thing you did, not at the track where it's always hectic), just you and your bike and all the free and new parts you need! As you throw things away that would make your local riding buddies sick, you make a note of what you need to do in the coming weeks to stay on schedule with everything. The day wraps up around the 10-hour mark with the wiring of the grips. At least that always ended up being the last thing I did on the bike.

Saturday: The day of the race and it's a very, very busy 16-hour day with lots of changes to the bike when your rider, seeing himself well off the pace, declares his bike "unrideable" and you have to be the monkey to his ringmaster.

Sunday: Your day off (if you count four hours of sleep, an early morning flight and another three-hour time change as a day off)! When you do get home you're so beat from the night before that you just lie on the couch like a zombie from 28 Days Later.

Monday: Go to the workshop and prepare your outdoor MX machine for testing on Tuesday with your rider. When you finish the three or four hours of prep and get all the parts together that you need for the next day's testing, you now have to rebuild your brakes from the weekend, grease the linkage and keep up on your SX schedule. This is not so bad – only nine hours or so.

Tuesday: Get up at the crack of dawn and get down to the race shop so that you can drive the test truck to some track that's out in the middle of the desert. This track is so far out in the middle of nowhere that if your truck broke down it wouldn't be long before the coyotes and mountain lions got you and somebody someday would find your skeleton with a fanny pack

on. Your van is already loaded with everything you need and when you finish the drive you immediately unload everything because the rider is due at the track at 10am. So you wait and then wait some more because one thing I've learned is that the riders will pretty much show up when they want. In all my years of being a mechanic and testing, David Vuillemin is the only guy that always showed up at the planned time. So as you sit on the bumper and think about all the extra sleep you could've had, the rider rolls up in some sort of vehicle that's worth more than you make in a year. They don't drive to the track though – the wife/girlfriend/gear-guy/man-friend drives while they sleep.

They ride a little bit and you guys go through the day trying out all sorts of things that looked good on the dyno and on paper but in the end it's all "unrideable" and the rider goes back to the settings that he has always liked. So after a day of accomplishing very little outside of the fact that you're dirty, smelly and hungry (the rider ate his lunch while you worked on his bike, you never got a chance) you head back to the shop to see that the motor that you shipped back from the supercross arrived and now you have to go through it and ship it back tomorrow. You grab a can of Monster because you know it's going to be a *looooong* night. This day usually ends up being 15 hours.

Wednesday: Another beautiful day of outdoor testing that begins at the butt



crack of dawn and it doesn't matter that you were at the shop rebuilding your motor until 11pm, the rider needs to get going on settings that will, inevitably, suck poo. So in the hot sun you go and you have your stop watches ready to figure out whether or not your settings actually work. This is really the only way to tell if your rider is enjoying your settings. The problem being is the track changes so fast and often that when you do make a change in the morning, the track is totally different by the afternoon.

All in all I hope one thing is clear here – you have to love this sport to do it and all the mechanics should get their heads checked.



medical milway Alan Milway is a qualified sports scientist who runs MX Fitness specialising in training motocross and enduro riders. For more information on how Alan can help you train go to his website www.mxfitness.co.uk or call him on 07810 827427

RIDING OFF-ROAD IS EASY PEASY, RIGHT? AFTER ALL IT'S THE BIKE THAT DOES ALL THE WORK. SO WHY IS IT A 15-MINUTE MOTO IS EVEN MORE INTENSE THAN CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING, WIDELY REGARDED AS THE DADDY OF ALL EXERCISE?

Words by Alan Milway

fter peeling yourself off the bike, removing your helmet and slumping into a canvas chair it's clear that what you've just done was hard work - whether it was a motocross race, an enduro or just a 15-minute session at your local practice track.

In order to try and help explain the physical effort that goes hand-in-hand with riding dirt bikes I wore my Polar heart rate monitor while at a practice track and recorded what my heart was doing to show what an average Joe actually goes through on the bike.

I may be a fitness trainer but I also ride dirt bikes and love anything with two wheels - I regularly ride MX practice tracks in the UK and mountain tracks and trails over in the Alps on my KTM 250SX-F. In order to show the efforts involved in just a practice session I wore the heart rate monitor for a day at Wildmoor practice track. This is shown in the heart rate trace.

The first thing that is clear from the graph are the four 'peaks'. These show the 15-minute sessions on the track. The dips between these are just recovering at the van, milling about by the track watching the other sessions or stuffing myself with a dirty burger (only joking).

As is clear most noticeably in the first peak, the heart rate jumps up from a 'walking' heart rate of 70bpm to 160bpm almost immediately. This is a jump from 35 per cent of my max effort to 85 per cent of my max effort within a minute. A true highlight of the need for a warm-up during a race situation as it's a clear shock to the body.

The heart rate remains at a very high plateau for pretty much the full duration of the short session and is at over 90 per cent of my maximum heart rate for this entire time. It then falls back down towards resting after the flag came out but doesn't drop down to pre-exercise levels - this is partly due to the fact I didn't stay still enough (I had friends in the other session to take pics of so it wasn't a 'proper' recovery). Also, as the day wore on, recovery became harder and slower due to fatigue - heart rates don't fall back down as quickly.

The third moto shows a drop in heart rate during the session. I had some bad arm pump in the sand and instead of slowing the pace right down I took a lap off and rested up before heading out again. This shows how guickly the heart rate came down with a break - testament to the body's ability to recover (the fourth moto

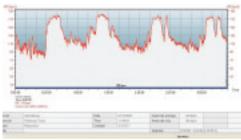
shows a similar drop, only this time it's due to a bike issue).

The most interesting point from this relaxed, no-pressure day is the height my heart rate reached - to go at full effort of over 90 per cent maximum in a sport that is not 'human powered' shows the level of effort required when you are just pushing yourself personally. For a given individual this effort will come down with an improvement in technique and practice but will go back up as you push yourself harder - in effect it will allow you to ride the bike harder and concentrate on technique. If you don't have the fitness you will simply not be able to sustain even a short exercise period.

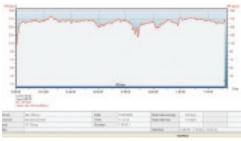
This on its own is interesting but I feel it important to try and draw comparisons to another more traditionally fitness-based sport. To do this I wore the heart rate monitor for a training session I did in the Alps. Cross-country skiing is deemed one of the most aerobically challenging exercises - even more so than road cycling as it uses the upper body so much as well as the legs.

Snaking up from the village I stay in during the winter there is a 'black' cross country route





Al's motocross heart trace...



...and his cross-country skiing reading

that climbs and weaves through the forest up to the high resort of Avoriaz. It is a hard – but strangely satisfying – slog for over an hour and rewards you with amazing views and aches that extend from glutes to triceps! This session was one performed with a professional mountain biker who had come over for a training camp. He was staying with me and we did this every morning before lunch for the week he was there.

Instead of the 'up and down' heart rate of the sessions on the track, this shows a much steadier effort throughout the exercise period. Where the motocross had breaks between hard efforts this was one long effort of 1hour 15mins.

The heart rates do not reach the dizzying levels of those reached on the motocross bike but they sat at an average of over 85 per cent of my maximum — even with a dip in effort due to waiting for my training partner after he crashed! The maximum heart rate was 176BPM and close to that achieved on the bike but not quite.

To be able to sit at this high percentage of my maximum is due to good prior training as anaerobic efforts would not allow you to go for so long at these levels. Someone of lower fitness may be able to do the first part of the session at

the same pace but then have to reduce speed and heart rate to allow them to continue.

The sustained effort feels hard and as there is nothing to focus on except the path ahead the perceived exertion is higher than doing laps in the sand for 15 minutes, even though the heart rates do not reach the same high levels. This heart rate graph also shows such a good comparison between effort levels – from a sport deemed by some as not fitness-based to one deemed the most fitness-based, the levels are remarkably similar.

If you are looking to improve your riding and racing, looking at this evidence should help you in deciding which exercises are most appropriate. Adding up the four short motos I did still tallies over an hour of exercise at more than 85-90 per cent of my maximum effort levels. It would therefore make sense to try and replicate this in training during the week to prepare my body for this onslaught!

The first thing you want to do is to improve the duration at which you can ride and push yourself. An hour or more of constant exercise will help develop the body not only to withstand these higher than normal levels but also to

recover quickly and prepare for the next moto. Shorter, harder sessions will then let you try and raise this ceiling of sustained high-intensity work.

If you are currently basing your training around the weights bench you can see from this that you are focusing on the wrong thing entirely. There is good evidence to show benefit from strength training – and it will help greatly. However, cardio should be the focus, especially if you are limited with training time.

I used a Polar S series heart rate monitor to record, store and download my heart rates. It allows me to analyse and see exactly what I am doing. These models don't come cheap but are a good benefit to me. They don't have to be used to this level though and Polar's range starts at simple, user-friendly models that will give you valuable information as to what your heart is actually doing.

I hope that this has helped you visualise what is going on at the track before you slump back in the chair – something that is clearly well deserved!

 Thanks to Polar – for info on their range of HRMs see www.polar.fi



THE FIRST-EVER ESPN MOTO X WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP BRINGS MOTO TO A MASSIVE TV AUDIENCE n the history of American motocross and supercross promotion, the emphasis has always been on selling tickets but apparently this isn't a concern for ESPN, the promoters of the Navy Moto X World Championships. Very, very few people show up to watch the event live but why would they? Why spend \$15 for parking and a further \$25 per ticket (not to mention the typical ridiculous food and drink prices) when you can sit down on your couch and watch it live on ESPN in high definition? It seems nearly everyone does the latter and the end result is a crowd that can literally all fit in the shade under the stadium overhangs - and a TV audience that brings huge exposure to a number of racers and riders... dirtbikerider





Style and Freestyle, Adams is declared the overall MXWC champ and wins a custom Evel Knievel Harley Davidson. "Dude, I had no idea that ESPN was even giving away that custom Evel Knievel Harley Davidson until they called me down to present it to me," Adams says. "I'm so stoked - I'm going to pimp it out with some gold spoked rims and maybe even throw an exhaust on that baby!'

BEST TRICK

All of the buzz surrounding Best Trick seems to follow last year's X Games Best Trick winner Kyle Loza. He won X with a body varial and then he steps it up big for the MXWC, creating a trick called 'Electric Death'. The trick is basically a bar-hop but instead of just bringing his feet back through the bars he flips all the way around, letting go of the bike and grabbing back on. Essentially, it's a backflip where only the rider flips but the bike flies true - in theory. Loza has never attempted the trick onto dirt.

"I've done it into the foam pit a whole bunch of times but I figured why do it at home when it doesn't matter?" Loza said. "I might as well just do it here where it counts. Into the foam pit I've landed it 87 times in a row so I feel good about it but I'm just not going to do it on the dirt until I have to. It's not worth getting hurt before the event.'

The event starts off with last year's big hype Scott Murray successfully pulling a double backflip – which he tried and failed to do at X last year. This sets the bar high and it seems likely that the only person that can knock him off the top of the rostrum is Loza with his Electric Death. But Loza's first attempt ends in a crash as he washes out upon landing. After Murray sits out his second run with no other tricks to do, Loza makes a second attempt at the Electric Death and the landing is even worse. So in the end it's Murray with the gold, doing the one trick he knows how to do.

'Everybody's bringing such big tricks," Murray says. "I was sitting on the sidelines waiting for a double-grab flip or any one of these things that they're doing. The double flip is two years old now so I honestly didn't know how it was going to work out. I came here to do it and I wanted to stick it and show everybody in America that I could do it. I'm happy to have it over with. It's never a fun thing to sit there and think about it for a week or three weeks or six months in this case. I'm definitely glad to get it over with at this place and hopefully come Summer X I can dial it in a little bit better and work on something new."



The first major event of the Moto X World Championships is Supermoto X which is originally scheduled to act additionally as the opening round of the AMA supermoto series. However, with the utter dominance shown by Graves Motorsports Yamaha's Mark Burkhart last year's X Games and AMA supermoto champion - some of the riders are thanking their lucky stars that this isn't an AMA round.

Burkhart's the only rider jumping a tricky triple section as the track re-enters the dium and it creates a huge advantage on a track that's otherwise tough to pass on. In the Main Event Aussie KTM rider Troy Herfoss grabs the holeshot with Red Bull Honda's Jeff Ward in tow while Burkhart's near the back. But only a couple laps into the Main Burkhart has already fought his way into third - mainly by virtue of his triple-triple line – and is closing fast on Herfoss and Ward who is the new leader.

As Burkhart closes on Herfoss, Ward begins to suffer from pretty serious arm pump and begins to fade. Burkhart quickly finds his way around Herfoss and then Ward and then Herfoss also passes Ward on the final lap to take the silver. So Burkhart is firmly established as the top supermoto racer in America.

There was a lot of pressure, running the number one," Burkhart says. "Actually, I didn't even want to do it but everyone wanted me to so I went ahead and did it. The track wasn't easy but passing was pretty easy with that triple-triple so it worked out well for me.'

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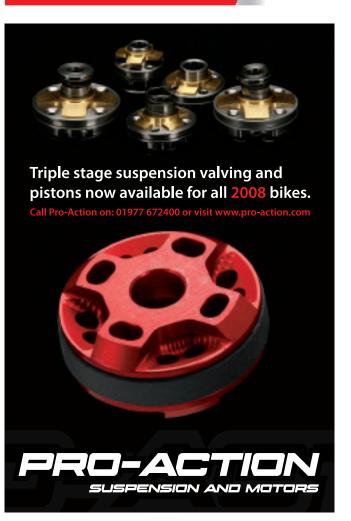
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N'GUTS!

THREE ROUNDS DOWN AND THE TEMPERATURE'S RISING AS THE BEST MX RACERS IN THE WORLD SLIP, SLOG AND SLUG IT OUT AS THE GP SEASON KICKS OFF IN HOLLAND, SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

Words and photos by ALEX HODGKINSON

hat's not me!" "Yes it is, Billy. Look, it's a Honda and it's not a Martin Honda or you'd just be able to see their sticker on the front fender. Did you wear roll-offs?" "Yeah." "Then it must be you and it can't be Mike, he wears a neck brace." "You're right. I'd forgotten just HOW bad it was!"

It's Wednesday at Barra in Portugal on the municipal camping. The sun is shining. I've got enough kit with me to just throw my jeans and jacket from Spain in the garage until I get home but the riders are all down the washhouse, trying to remove dirt from places it should not be (both in their gear and their bodily extremities) while mechanics do likewise with the bikes – except for KTM who simply chuck six factory SX250F engines worth 20 grand away rather than take the risk of a DNF due to grit in the works. Oh to be a dustbin man in Mattighofen!

I've just spent three days playing Sherlock Holmes on the images. Half the paddock is parked up 50 yards from the Atlantic coast and most have chipped in an opinion on who's who. Billy Mac takes some persuasion to recognise himself so what chance have I got of identifying the five riders stuck on the hillside in one shot? By Thursday I know we've got two out of five right. Not bad, eh, for the 'experts'?

Bellpuig isn't the worst mud most of us have seen – far from it in fact – but, as DT remarks, the problem is the water. Tommy Searle hits it flat out at the start of race two and has no chance as the Toomer stands up and flips him off and track manager Greg Atkins reckons he couldn't go on with heavy equipment even if he had some because they would sink. In fact, the only semblance of track maintenance is a bloke who spends all of 30 seconds trying to dig a channel for the water to run away...with a broken fork guard. A spade would be more practical!

FIM boss man Wolfgang Srb reckons "the young boys will get round" after red-flagging the Vets but they have to end the MX2 early as well when only Paulin, Monni and Swordy come round at all in the last five minutes. They know from the transponders that Guarneri has been leading but they can't give the Italian – upside-down on the steps for the last 11 minutes – or new leader Paulin the chequered flag because they don't know what they look like!

The MX1 riders have had enough and spontaneously refuse to ride again so their final moto's cancelled for safety reasons.

The opener at Valkenswaard starts wet but at least the sun comes out for race day. And it shines on Ken De Dycker and Tyla Rattray who come away with maximum points. Ramon chases his Suzuki team-mate home for second in MX1 with a 3-4 card from KTM's Max Nagl who takes third with 2-5 finishes. Britain's best finisher is Billy Mac in fourth overall who makes up for his opening moto 10th with second in race two and his Monster CAS Honda team-mate Mike Brown also scores along with Molson Kawasaki's Tom Church. Skills, Muncher!

like Brown or Church lames Noble





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SERIESSTANDINGS

MX	1 >	>
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IVI			
1	David Philippaerts	(Monster Yamaha)	102 points
2	Steve Ramon	(Teka Suzuki)	96
3	Josh Coppins	(Monster Yamaha)	83
4	Billy MacKenzie	(Monster CAS Honda)	79
5	Ken De Dycker	(Teka Suzuki)	77
6	Max Nagl	(Red Bull KTM)	58
7	Jonathan Barragan	(Silver Action KTM)	54
8	Sebastien Pourcel	(GPKR Kawasaki)	52
9	Tanel Leok	(Kawasaki Europe)	50
10	Kornel Nemeth	(Sarholz KTM)	48
12	Mike Brown	(Monster CAS Honda)	42
17	Tom Church	(Molson Kawasaki)	20
19	James Noble	(KTM UK)	20
	10		

10	James Nobic	(ICTIVI OIC)	20
M>	(2 >>		
1	Antonio Cairoli	(Red Bull Yamaha)	126 point
2	Tyla Rattray	(Red Bull KTM)	121
3	Tommy Searle	(Red Bull KTM)	102
4	David Guarneri	(Ricci Yamaha)	86
5	Rui Goncalves	(Red Bull KTM)	81
6	Stephen Sword	(Molson Kawasaki)	80
7	Nicolas Aubin	(Ricci Yamaha)	78
8	Manuel Monni	(3C Yamaha)	60
9	Shaun Simpson	(KTM UK)	60
10	Jeremy Van Horebeek	(Champ KTM)	57
13	Gautier Paulin	(Molson Kawasaki)	48
16	Carl Nunn	(Suso MVRD Suzuki)	27
29	Elliott Banks-Browne	(Swift Suzuki)	8
30	Pascal Leuret	(Swift Suzuki)	5
	Jason Dougan	(Suso MVRD Suzuki)	3
35	Marcus Norlen	(Suso MVRD Suzuki)	2

V	ETERANS WORLD	CUP >>
1	Toine Van Dijk	36 points
2	Scott Eastwood	35
3	Thierry Godfroid	33
4	Peter Iven	32
5	Greg Hanson	31
9	Dave Thorpe	24

GOLDENOLDIES!

BRITISH TRIO KEEP THE OAP FLAG FLYING...

The British 'youngsters' may have had a torrid time in the Spanish gloop but for the old-timers Bellpuig is a much happier hunting ground.

The opening event in the three-round FIM Veterans World Cup sees Greg Hanson rip to a race one win on CCM's new MX450 from Belgian Peter Iven and fellow Brit Scott Eastwood. After a number of falls defending champ Dave Thorpe crosses the line a disappointing 19th but the four-time world champ fires back strongly in race two and is credited with 22 points for second when the appalling conditions bring the red flags out after two laps.

Following a first lap collision with DT, Greg's shunted off the track and is credited with 15th but best of the Brits in the overall standings is Easty who comes home sixth and now holds second in the points table with the next round scheduled for Mallory Park on May 31/June 1.





Brit hopes in MX2 are resting on Tommy Searle and Stephen Sword and Tommy snares fourth in Holland with a 3-5 card. Swordy sparks himself in the opener before battling back with seventh in the second moto but it's his fellow Scot Shaun Simpson who registers the honour of being second-best Brit with a brilliant sixth overall thanks to a 5-9 results. And British 'teamed' Frenchmen Gautier Paulin and Pascal Leuret also put points on the board.

After Spain's deluge the sun's back again from dawn to dusk in Portugal as the thermometer hits 98 in the shade. "This race will be more physically demanding than Spain,"

reckons Seb Pourcel on Saturday. It's certainly more rewarding for the Frenchie who scorches to the win after scoring just five points in four motos in the sludge.

Billy and Tommy each lead their classes in Portugal but both Brits slip off once – perhaps they've forgotten how to keep the bike upright without foot-deep grooves to slog through? Swordy comes off too but still gets fourth and Simpson goes down at the same turn three times in the first race.

Tommy is happy to be back on the podium though - "I rode bad the first two GPs and thought I'd lost it" - and it is he, not winner of the roasting by Mallory!

first three motos Tyla, who's closing down Tony C before he bins it in race two. The Sicilian reckons he's been sick and on antibiotics until Friday but he hauls on Sunday, the master again with feet-up drifts round 180 degree turns and cheeky look-backs after slick passes.

David Philippaerts doesn't, however, turn round after he plants Billy in the fence - he's too busy heading towards the series lead. Only Rattray and De Dycker have worn the red plate up to Portugal but both give them up to Italian double-act Tony and David after Agueda. The series has just started to warm up. It should be



SWORDY AND SIMPSON TRADE BLOWS AND BILLY MAC KEEPS HIS WIN-STREAK GOING AS THE HEAVENS OPEN AT TORRINGTON

Photo by JP O'Connell

fter the opening two rounds of the 2008 Maxxis British MX Championship havoc all day. the title fight heads into apple beer country and to Torrington where another blue and whitewash sees red plate holders Billy MacKenzie and Stephen Sword

extend their series leads.

Heavy rain in the week leading up to the races means it's a Devon slopfest but ruts and rain present few problems for the two Scots -

although a malfunctioning startgate causes

After topping MX1 qualifying by a whopping 8.6 seconds Billy Mac repeats his disappearing acts from Donington and Canada Heights by nailing two holeshots and doing a runner both times. The Monster CAS Honda rider's opening race winning margin of 64 seconds looks impressive - that is until he takes the second by a full 96 seconds!

ARB Kawasaki's Mark Jones follows Billy home in the opening race and there's another green machine - this time the MotoXtreme mount of Mark Hucklebridge - second across the line in race two. And it's yet another Kawasaki – this one's in Molson colours with Tom Church twisting the throttle – that gets second on the day thanks to a 3-3 card.

Huck's race two runner-up spot combined

with his first moto fifth is good enough for the

SERIESSTANDINGS Billy MacKenzie (Monster CAS Honda) 150 Mark Jones (ARB Kawasaki) 106 Tom Church (Molson Kawasaki) 106 James Noble (KTM UK) 97 Brad Anderson (Swift Suzuki) 89 Wayne Smith (Pioneer Emberson Yamaha) 87 Kenneth Gundersen (UTAG Yamaha.com) 78 Mark Hucklebridge (MotoXtreme Kawasaki) 70 Mark Eastwood (Wiseco Honda) 70 10 Danny Smyth (Wiseco Honda) MX2 Stephen Sword (Molson Kawasaki) 129 points Shaun Simpson (KTM UK) 113 Martin Barr (UTAG Yamaha.com) 111 Elliott Banks-Browne (Swift Suzuki) 87 72 70 67 Neville Bradshaw (DB Honda) Jason Dougan (Suso MVR-D Suzuki) Pascal Leuret (Swift Suzuki) Marcus Norlen (Suso MVR-D Suzuki) 60 Carl Nunn (Suso MVR-D Suzuki) 60 10 Carlos Campano (UTAG Yamaha.com)

final step on the podium but the day's a disaster for Swift Suzuki's Brad Anderson. The North Easterner's holding second in the opening moto – and second in the series standings – until a big crash on the final lap knocks him for six. After taking what appears to be an eternity to recover Brad bravely remounts to cross the line 10th but he doesn't come out for race two and slips to fifth in the championship.

Things are a tad tighter in MX2 where series

leader and three-time champ Stephen Sword holeshots the opener but loses the lead in turn two after fellow Scot Shaun Simpson makes a banzai pass. But the KTM UK man can't keep it on two wheels and once Swordy's back at the front he pulls clear for the win.

UTAG Yamaha's Martin Barr takes second from Elliott Banks-Browne on the Swift Suzuki with Simpson recovering to fourth.

Race two sees Monster CAS Honda's Mike

Brown, 10th in the first moto, rediscovering his holeshot touch but on the opening lap he tangles with Swordy and the pair go down. Both riders struggle to restart their bikes with the Molson Kawasaki rider staging an epic fight through the pack to go from 21st to third at the flag and Brownie battling back to ninth.

Pack to go from 21st to third at the flag and Srownie battling back to ninth.

With his main rival out of the running for the win it's Simpson who bags 25 points from Suso MVR-D Suzuki's Jason Dougan.





standings but the reigning champion has had it far from easy since his win at the opening oni Bou remains on top of the overall WTC round in Luxembourg.

Bou wins the second day of the American competition to edge clear of his rivals but knowing that he is in for one in the USA. However, normal service resumes as team-mate Takahisa Fujinami steals the glory on day Gas Gas #1 Adam Raga triumphs at a cold and windy Irish GP while Bou's Repsol Montesa HRC fight to retain his title this season. a real

With only three out of the 10 rounds completed the battle to become king has developed into a three-way America, sees Beta-mounted Dougie Lampkin drop USA wrecking any outside chance of at a stab at the title. A string of disappointing results, the worst tussle with the remaining fringe candidates having being a distant eighth spot on the closing day in contention. Sherco's Albert Cabestany remains his inconsistent self with a seventh place in the to sixth in the championship behind his younger done their level best to rule themselves out of

team-mate Jeroni Fajardo.

rubs salt in Lampkin's wounds with a morale-boosting sixth position on the closing day of the US GP which brings to an end a series of below par showings for suit the multi-time world champion. The transition to the two-stroke Italian machine has been anything but seeming to be struggling to find grip from a standing And Mont-mounted fellow countryman James Dabill After such a promising performance at the initial encounter in Luxembourg, Lampkin fails to find the same kind of form at two venues that should really start since his move from the four-stroke Montesa. easy for Dougie with the resilient Yorkshireman

him of his moment of glory during a wet and slippery second day in Sequatchie, Tennessee. While the British pairing of Dabill and Lampkin do not enjoy the career-best fourth place but three time penalties rob best of starts to their 2008 campaigns, the Spanish Dabill comes within two marks of recording a continue to be the surprise in the pack. After a duo of Fajardo and a rejuvenated Marc Freixa the promising youngster.

career was all but over but a return to form and two disastrous spell at Scorpa it seemed that Freixa's top five places aboard a Gasser at the latest round show otherwise.

in 2006 and his debut runner-up position in last year's Junior series, Montesa's Alexz Wigg looks clear supporting categories is red hot and is packed with British interest. Following on from his world Youth title convincing wins at rounds one and two. However, the Away from the main class the competition in both favourite to take the Junior title this season after two finishes in a lowly fifth spot on the opening day in Sequatchie. Thankfully for the young Brit, his then closest challenger Alfredo Gomez suffers an even championship fight is turned on its head as Wigg worst outing and can only manage sixth.

Loris Gubian who moves to within four points of Alexz The new threat to Wigg's supremacy comes in the in the title race thanks to back-to-back victories in the expense of his transatlantic voyage and moves him form of the more experienced French Sherco rider USA. A 4-3 showing for Sam Haslam justifies the

Ross Danby makes it three British young guns in the world's top six as he excels with a second and fourth up to third place in the general classifications. And spot during his trip to the other side of the pond.

signed up by the Italian Top Trial Team. This is the same squad that Dabill won his European and world Yorkshire youngster is proving his worth since being Through in the Youth/125 division there is more British success thanks to Jack Challoner. The Junior title with.

capable of snatching at least one round victory during teenager Patrick Smage who robs Challoner of a first day win in the USA on a most cleans tie-break. The Like Bou, Challoner has a real fight on his hands GP victory to his Irish GP success. With two days of TTT Beta is soon back on top, adding a day two US Challoner heads Smage by seven points in a battle with there being a whole bunch of riders who are the year. Jack's main opposition is the American competition at the Japanese round looming next that is sure to go all the way to the last counting event in Spain.







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SPAIN DAMAGE!

JOHNNY AUBERT SLAYS JUHA SALMINEN AND TAKES A CHUNK OUT OF HIS CHANCES OF A RECORD-BREAKING EIGHTH WORLD CROWN

Words and photos by **JONTY EDMUNDS**

uha Salminen's hopes of securing a record-breaking eighth World Enduro Championship take a turn for the worse at round three of the '08 WEC series as the ice cool Finn fails to finish the opening day's competition due to mechanical problems.

Gifting Enduro 2 class rival Johnny Aubert a massive 25-point championship advantage, Juha knows that he now has his work cut out if he is to stand any chance of stopping Aubert claiming his first ever world title. "There's still a long way to go and anything can happen but it's going to be tough to beat Johnny. He is riding well but the problem is that even if I beat him each day he will probably finish second which makes it hard to get back the points I lost."

While Salminen heads home from the GP of Spain dejected, Aubert – as you'd expect – is delighted. "It's not good to win when your rival has a problem but it's racing. I pushed hard and beat Juha on day two which was good. He will fight even harder now to win the championship, Juha never gives up."

With Aubert and Salminen still comfortably ahead of the rest of the E2 class riders, third is held by Sweden's Joakim Ljunggren on his pre-production Husaberg.

The battle to top the E1 class in Spain sees some of the closest ever WEC racing as local rider Ivan Cervantes and Finn Mika Ahola push each other to the limit in the hope of establishing themselves at the top of the class. It's Ahola who wins on both days, just, to extend his championship lead.

Consistent but not quite fast enough to match Mika or Ivan's pace, Italian Simone Albergoni lies second in the series standings behind Mika with Cervantes third and Finnish privateer Eero Remes fourth. The Spanish GP isn't a good one for Brit Tom Sagar as like Salminen he suffers a mechanical problem on day two after scoring just a handful of points from day one. Finishing both days in the points, Daryl Bolter places well in Spain and lies 12th in the E1 championship, right behind Sagar.

Continuing to march forward in the Enduro 3 class, Finn Samuli Aro wins in Spain to further extend his championship advantage. Now 27 points ahead of team-mate Marko Tarkkala, Aro looks unstoppable as far as the E3 title is concerned while Tarkkala and Frenchman Christophe Nambotin separate themselves from the rest of the class and battle it out for the second and third place spot. Despite failing to finish day two in Spain, TM's Euan McConnell is 13th in the E3 championship.

At the head of the Enduro Junior class, 125cc KTM-mounted Thomas Oldrati and 125cc Husqvarna-mounted Marc Bourgeois are level pegging on 127 points while Simon Wakely is the highest placed Brit in seventh with Greg Evans 10th.

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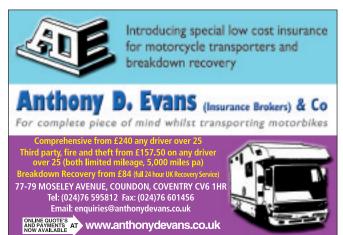












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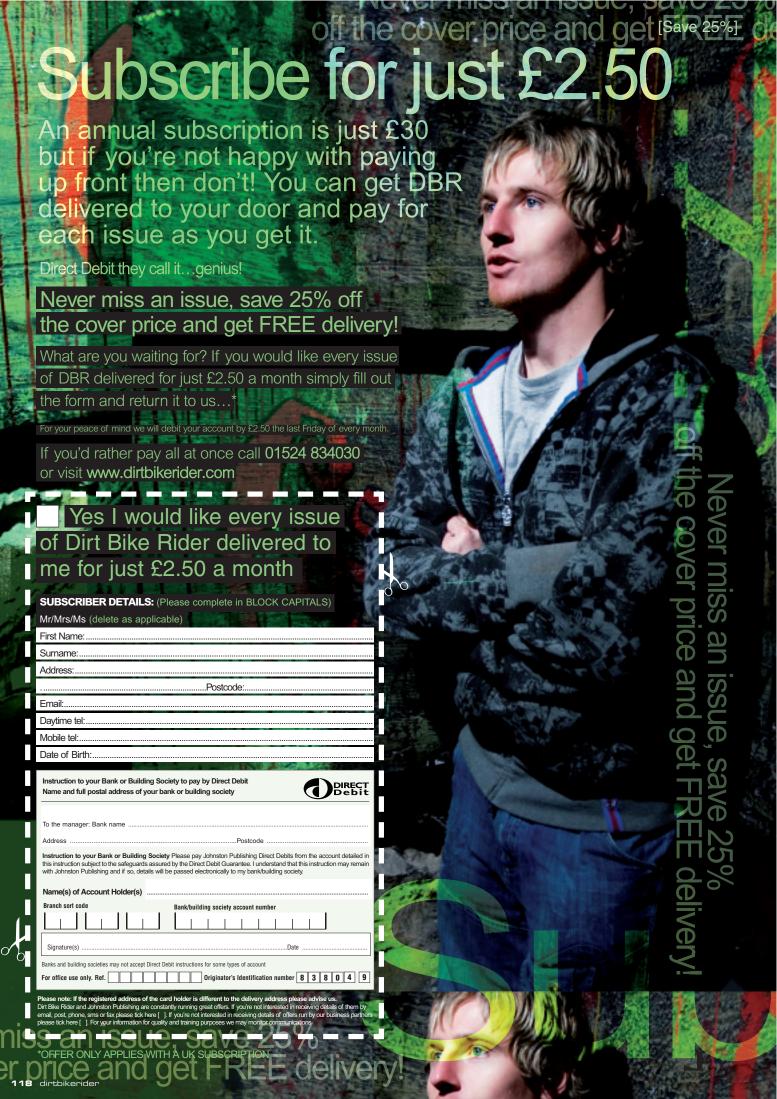
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Words and photo by Mike Gurney

cott Elderfield continues to make all the headlines on and off the track this season as the second round of the BYMX fires up at the Motoland complex near Mildenhall.

After a cracking day of pre-event testing around the Suffolk circuit, Scott signed a Swift Suzuki contract and you couldn't help but notice the massive smiles in the Elderfield camp as they enthused about the future, the awesome power and handling characteristics of the Suzuki and the mind-blowing professional standards of back-up they are receiving from the Banks outfit.

The rest of the season will now be spent thrashing it out with the Maxxis MX2 guys, contesting selected GPs and, of course, the top youth championships. Go get 'em Scott! Meanwhile, back on the track it's Danger

UK's Joe Gregory and 16-year-old flying Scot Sean McDonald who find themselves heading the Open class table on 182 points each after the Suffolk tear-up. Joe, Scott and Edward Allingham all posted a race win each but it's consistency and good fortune that will win this one as Scott cruelly missed out in race three after leading. Lewis King and Tommy Fenwick both grabbed vital championship points along with a cracking performance by James Hutchinson on the Bikesport Yamaha that secured him a second place podium finish on the weekend.

Luke Hawkins with a devastating 180-point rout of the BW85s has taken over at the top of the table as Dan Hutchinson and Jamie McCanney had a weekend of mixed fortunes. Ryan Houghton on the Redline KTM with another polished four-race display moved into second.

In the SW85cc stakes Ben Howell and Jordan Godwin dominated with two race wins apiece giving Ben a bit of breathing space on top of the championship pile but the weekend's top step and biggest piece of silverware went to Jordan with a stonking 1-2-1-2 race card.
Callan Cooper and Micky Eccles did all they could to keep the pressure on with another set of superb races as James Dunn dropped a few precious points.

In the Junior 65s hot pre-season favourite Ben Green got his act together with a last race win to add to two second placings but it still wasn't enough to out-point Hanson Racing's Jack Wilson as he snaffled up the other three race wins for a superb return that shoots him up the championship table. Ryan Snaith finished third overall on the weekend and still holds sway in the overall standings but only just as this one shapes up into a great little tussle.

OPEN			
1=	Joe Gregory		
	Sean McDonald	182 points	
3	Tommy Fenwick	173	
В۷	/85cc		
1	Luke Hawkins	285 points	
2	Ryan Houghton	267	
3	Dan Hutchinson	248	
SW	/85cc		
1	Ben Howell	294 points	
2	Callan Cooper	256	
3	Mickey Eccles	253	
JU	NIOR 65cc		
1	Ryan Snaith	271 points	
2	Ben Green	265	

3 Casey Connolly



BESTOFBRITISH!

Words by Mike Gurney

his year's BSMA Best of British, with a mixture of registered and non-registered championship runners, kicked off at Matchams Park with a with a real five star display from Connor Walkley.

Team Green's 13-year-old muscle mountain of raw talent completely dominated the Senior section leading every lap of every race with ease for a maximum 225-point haul from his five outings on the 125cc two-stroke machinery.

There were other real stand-out performances in the BWs from Matthew Bayliss – snatching three race wins – and Luke Dean with the other two as they shared all the chequered flag glory. Determined efforts in a competitive section from Josh Brine, Aaron Pipon and James Dunn also caught the eye.

Jordan Godwin and Liam Garland are fast becoming stars on the SW scene across all the codes and they duly decimated the field at Matchams with another 3-2 in race wins going in Jordan's favour.

Joe Jeffries, Jack Wilson and Josh Gilbert all crossed the line first in the Junior 65s but it's championship registered Jack that has early control of the points table.

SERIES**STANDINGS** SERIES**STANDINGS**

SE	NIORS	
1	Connor Walkley	225 points
2	Oliver Rusby	202
3	Connor Pearce	192
В۷	V85cc	
1	Matthew Bayliss	221 points
2	Josh Brine	207
3	Liam Wright	197
SV	V85cc	
1	Jordan Godwin	221 points
2	Jay Thomas	197
3	Ryan Fellows	194
JU	NIOR 65cc	
1	Jack Wilson	214 points
0	0 111	007

Jamie Carpenter

MAXIMUMMEN!

Word and photo by Mike Gurney

en Howell with another impressive performance including an individual race win on a bone-dry, super-quick Dean Moor circuit kept the Motopross KTM out front in the KWS Masters SW85cc points chase. But razor sharp performances from Adam Sterry with two race wins and Jay Thomas with the other show just how close and ultra-competitive the red plate section is this season.

It's six wins on the bounce and a perfect scorecard for Luke Hawkins in the BW85 competition together with form that's fully justifying all the pre-season hype for the PAR teamster. Storming Brad Pocock and young Robbie Muscat kept up the pressure in second and third with a string of quality results but it's looking good for the West Country Honda guy right now.

Mel Pocock holds the other unblemished record, this time in the Youth 125cc standings, with his pace and power aboard the UTAG Yamaha troubling the guy with the chequered flag six unbeaten times this season. Joe Gregory, Gavin Foulson and Lithuanian express Vytautus Bucas did all they could to mount a decent challenge claiming the individual race runner-up positions in Cumbria but Mel is a class apart in this field.

SERIES**STANDINGS**

1	Mel Pocock	300 points
2	Robert Devonald Batt	236
3	Dan Brough	199

U	Dan Dioagn	100
В۷	V85cc	
1	Luke Hawkins	300 point
2	Brad Pocock	270
3	Rob Muscat	266
SW85cc		
1	Ben Howell	289 point

Callan Cooper 264 250 James Dunn









DEVONCREAM!

LLOYD LANDS MXY2 WIN

Words by Mike Gurney Photo by Ben Johnson

ust when everyone was beginning to think that the two-stroke 144cc brigade were well and truly out-muscled – as well as being heavily out-numbered – by the four-stroke 250F opposition in the various youth open championships, along comes Lloyd Morgan to stand that particular theory on its head.

Lloyd delivered the biggest curve ball of the youth season so far with a storming overall victory at round two of the MXY2 series at Torrington in Devon to prove the buzzboxes are definitely alive and kicking. No pundits this side of Tredegar in South Wales saw this one coming – yours truly included – as it was just about as far leftfield as it gets. Fair play, hats off and all around massive respect to Lloyd though as the 17-year-old KTM flier snatched a real slice of glory in the muddy conditions as he slithered to a fourth place finish in the first encounter behind race winner Scott Elderfield before coming home first in race two.

Scott quite incredibly won the opener by an amazing one minute and 15 seconds from fastest qualifier Joe Gregory in second and Team Green's Josh Waterman in third. And Scott looked odds on for a truly mega impressive mud-caked Devon double as he led race two right into the final lap before a smashed gearbox put him out when he was literally miles in front of the field.

Benefiting from Scott's misfortune, that man Morgan put in a terrific performance coupled with a best lap time that was only just shy of Elderfield's fastest. Lloyd took the chequers 24 seconds ahead of second place finisher Rowland resulting in celebrations for the Welsh contingent, a career best overall victory for Lloyd to savour and seventh place in the championship table – not a bad day's work!

Elsewhere on the day there were terrific single race performances from Joe Gregory on the Danger UK Honda and Jack Rowland on the Jet Shed machinery to snatch the two runner-up berths with Edward Allingham and Waterman on the third steps of the individual race podiums. For the ACU Academy David Games in both races and Sam Davis in race two looked to be well on the pace with competitive lap times but right out of luck in the tortuous conditions when it came to putting points on the board.

conditions when it came to putting points on the board.

But Josh Waterman – the third member of the ACU Academy in this particular competition – bagged another impressive 33 points to add to the 36 he collected at the opening round meaning at the halfway stage he now has a slender three-point advantage over Elderfield with Allingham on the PAR Homes Honda a further three points adrift. The third and penultimate round of the championship is scheduled for Foxhill on July 27.

MAXANSTIE!

THE FLYING FRECKLE WINS AT OAK HILL BEFORE CLEANING UP IN RENO AND GETTING ANOTHER STEP CLOSER TO QUALIFYING FOR LORETTA LYNN'S

ey everyone! After a successful week in Lake Whitney we headed two hours north to the Oak Hill National. The track was more of a sandy base which made it rough up fast. With a different ruling system I was able to ride in five different classes.

Practice and the heats went well putting me into the finals with some good positions. One of the main differences between the Lake Whitney National and here was that the heat race results are only for grid position. This means that if you got fourth in your heat you would go to the line for the final in fourth but with no points. So if you won that race you would be crowned champion – a little different to Lake Whitney's two-moto format.

After a few days of bad gate picks and bad starts I was finally going to the line in a decent position in the Stock 85cc class due to my fourth in the heat race. I made a good shift on the gate to bring myself right into contention in the first turn in second behind Eli Tomac. We broke away from the rest of the field and I just stayed in tow. Finishing second in my first race of the morning and staying close to Eli definitely showed that my good results from last week weren't just a fluke!

The first few laps of the 85cc Open class were a mirror image of the Stock class. But with a second under my belt I had nothing to lose. We were running bar-to-bar until the final lap when I reeled him in through the uphill whoops allowing me to set up the pass in the woods. I managed to hang on to the lead, taking the championship!

With a win under my belt I was determined to get another in the Superminis – maybe a little too determined! Everybody who has ever started on concrete will know that you can't be too aggressive and break traction because you don't go anywhere. Well I broke traction and just started spinning. With this I was off to a bad start. With Tomac out in front again he was going to be hard to catch but who said I couldn't get to second? I charged through the pack using every inch of the track to find myself in third going into the last lap. I was homing in like a heat-seeking missile to finally reach my target in a 180 degree turn. So with another second going into my 125cc race I felt good.

My fourth last week seemed to be a bit of luck to some people so I was out to prove them wrong in my only big bike class. My factory Dunlop tyres hooked up great and managed to put me in third right behind Justin Barcia and Ian Trettel. I pushed hard to stay with those guys and with a good battle with my team-mate Jason Anderson I was able to round up a strong fourth.

Well, after two weeks of good racing it all came down to the 85cc Mod class and unluckily for me I seemed to save my worst till last, experiencing a bad start that put me way back and I was only able to salvage a fifth! Still, a great two weeks and a great experience. One title at Whitney and one at Oak Hill was more than I could have asked for. We are now looking forward to the next national in Las Vegas.

We travelled back home to California, spent two days building bicycle jumps and before we knew it we were on our way again — this time to a Loretta Lynn's qualifier in Reno, Nevada! The 20-hour drive was actually not too bad and was a lot more interesting than the one to Texas. There was actually some grass on the way and we saw some normal trees which was a change from all the shrubs and tumbleweed.

When we arrived at the track we were shocked to find that it was snowing! Still, it was like normal English weather and rather nice! I managed to win all my classes to qualify for the regional qualifiers at Glen Helen which then puts you through to Loretta's.

Awaiting the arrival of some fellow Englishmen who would be training with us for the next two weeks, Jordan and I continued to build our bicycle jumps! When Max Acres, Alfie Bowtell and Sam Bruce arrived we showed them around the camp then went straight into training. The fastest way to rid yourself of jet lag is to push it out of you with some hard work.

The first day of riding was at Lake Elsinore and the boys seemed to be getting into it well then by the end of the week it was time for a race. The race was at Competitive Edge and it was another LLQ (Loretta Lynn's qualifier). I'd already qualified so I was crew chief! I was sweeping the gate, pit boarding, shouting at them to go faster...oh and don't forget the Alfie Bowtell dance on the start!

A good two weeks of fun with some English guys was awesome – especially as we're on our way to go and battle the world at the World Mini GP in Las Vegas. The English invasion is about to take hold! Watch out!







out training - I'm that addicted! It was one of those decisions where I was sat there on my

sofa 'rocking out' and I just threw the guitar down, got my gear on as quickly as possible and was out the door within a minute! I went for an awesome run though, pushed hard the whole way and a run that normally takes me about one hour and 15 minutes took 53 minutes! So not only was I rocking Guitar Hero, I rocked my run too!

It all started when I stopped in to visit Tommy on the way to Torrington. He had Guitar Hero set up at his flat. I was completely new to it but after about the fifth try I started to get the hang of things and was hooked instantly! It even got us in the mood for a bit of music so it was another spontaneous decision to go out for the night! On with the dancing shoes and off we went! All the pics are up on my myspace - it was an awesome night but the best nights are always the ones that aren't planned I think. We danced our asses off - it's like an extra training session when me and Tom are on the dance floor together. It was the same at Cairoli's party last year, we just go for it!

Next stop was Torrington and it was out with the poker chips again. This time it was BC who took the pot, although I did manage to put Brad out the game again! He is like the poker god so it p****s him off big time when I put him out. The FUNNIEST thing though is when Brad puts Hayley out the game! You've never seen a strop like it before in your life! It's fantastic!

Everything looked amazing when we arrived for the race - I walked the track and it looked awesome, proper old school. I've raced at

track. However, that night the rain came down and it turned everything on its head. The track looked wrecked and I felt for the MXY2 guys as they were out first.

I also felt for Stevie - he only managed two-and-a-half laps before breaking his leg in the whoops which to be fair were a total slop and he still had the balls to attempt doubling them. Since being home he told me what happened and it was simply a case of him getting out of shape a little and putting his foot down for balance. He actually heard it - never mind felt it - snap! I stopped to see if he was okay before being handed a message to deliver to my old man in the pit box. But it wasn't just Stevie that the whoops caught out, it was also the paramedics who washed out on them, dropping Stevie on the stretcher! Ha ha! And the ambulance had to get towed out by a tractor. Anyways, five operations later to save him losing his leg and he's back on the mend and if any good has come of this the Compartment Syndrome Tribute Band was formed! See my youtube page at billymac211...

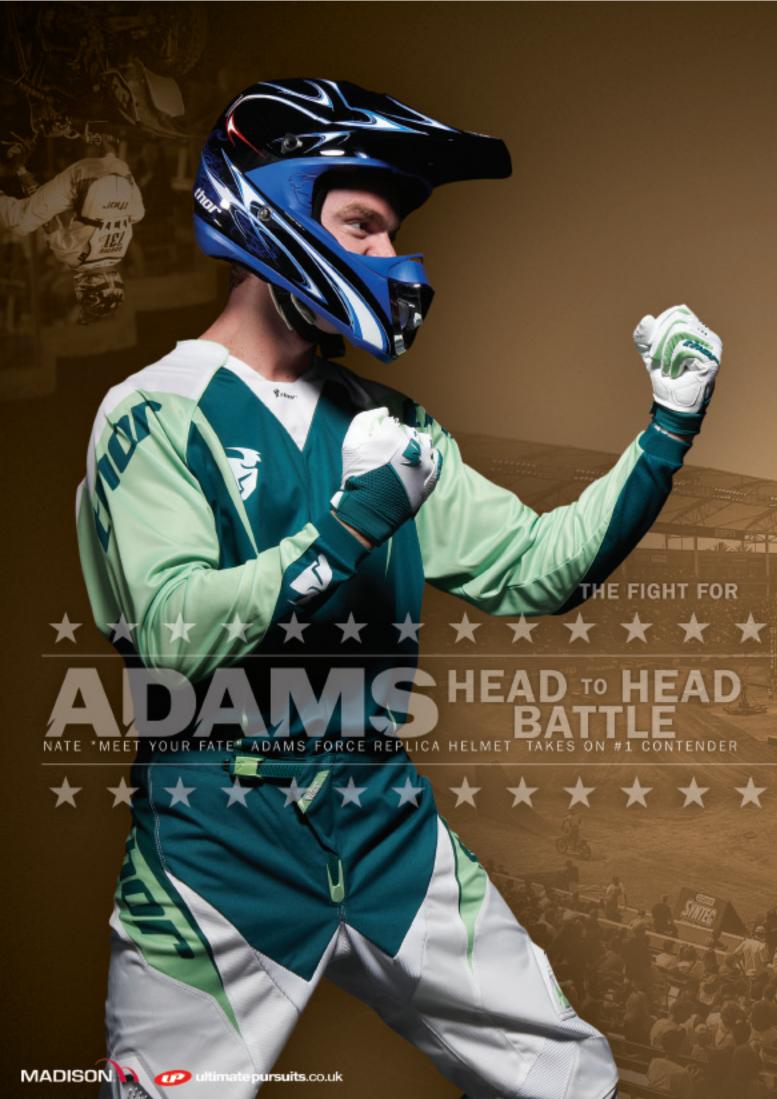
Torrington went amazing though with two wins again and the biggest holeshots I've ever pulled! The second one was insane! Because the start was so far from the pit box no-one could be arsed doing their gates so while I went to watch the MX2 I did my gate and packed it full of this dry clay I found. I didn't even have a rut! So when the gate dropped I was gone! I loved the track - it turned out brilliant and really technical with lots of ruts and tricky parts and I had a really good day.

Next I was off to Spain and as most of you

was on the limit putting in fast laps. But come Sunday the track was barely rideable. All the MX1 guys protested the start of the second moto. I didn't really mind if we raced or not as it was quite fun in the first race but the track was way worse after we had more rain so I went with the majority and stayed clean! I had an eighth in race one which I wasn't too happy with. I had come from the back and moved up to fifth at one point but then had a few silly crashes trying to

Off to Portugal next and me and Brownie drove the camper on a little road trip to the campsite on Sunday night - the quicker we got there the quicker we could relax for the week We had the mini bikes out down the beach again but I stayed out the ocean this time as the waves were huge! It was like a GP at the campsite and all the British teams were there - us British just love a camping trip don't we? We played football and caused mischief all week, it was really nice. Oh and I got sunburnt from running with no shirt on - got a nice big white strap mark where my heart rate monitor was.

The racing in Portugal was going so well – all Saturday I was second behind Pourcel and we were having little battles between ourselves for pole each session. He always snuck one in at the end. It was super, super hot that weekend and I led both races but couldn't keep it till the end - small mistakes and bad strategy cost me my first win away from Japan! But things look promising for the rest of the season, I'm in fourth place in the series now and only 20 points behind the leader so time to put in some consistent podiums!









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